

Christopher's tour is limited

CAIRO (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will only visit Syria and Israel in his three-day Middle East tour starting on Oct. 6, Foreign Minister Amr Musa said here Friday. The U.S. State Department last week announced that Mr. Christopher would go to Syria and Israel, but other possible legs were still under review. Mr. Musa hoped that Mr. Christopher's tour would yield "positive results" in bridging the gap between Syria and Israel. Syria's President Hafez Al Assad said Thursday Israel was to blame for the stalemate, and refused to initiate the next move. Cairo has been a regular stop for U.S. envoys in the region.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily by the Jordanian Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

King sends message to Singapore

SINGAPORE (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah on Friday delivered a written message from His Majesty King Hussein to Singaporean President Lee Kuan Yew. The message conveyed the greetings of King Hussein to the president and people of Singapore and called for enhancing relations between the two countries in various fields. Prince Abdullah thanked the Singaporean president on his country's stands supporting Arab causes and lauded Jordanian-Singaporean relations. Mr. Lee asked Prince Abdullah to convey his greetings to King Hussein and the Jordanian people.

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Hariri, stung by criticism, says resignation is final

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri publicly announced his decision to resign on Friday and warned that he would not change his mind.

Mr. Hariri, stung by criticism, first said he would resign on Thursday at a special government meeting.

Speaking at the opening of an exhibition in Beirut on Friday, the premier said he would "not go back" on his latest decision, following earlier threats to resign.

Mr. Hariri spoke bitterly of opposition against him since he came to power two years ago, especially accusations of corruption. He said he was resigning to protect reconstruction projects for Beirut's war-battered city centre.

"For two years our efforts have stumbled more than once against obstacles aimed at hampering them, provoking doubts and preventing them from succeeding — as if Lebanon was condemned to political decay and underdevelopment," he said.

"For two years we have tried to promote the reconstruction project, and for two years people have put up walls in front of us."

"That is why we made our latest decision, a decision we won't go back on, with the sole aim of defending the reconstruction project for Lebanon and securing its role in the region and in the world," Mr. Hariri said.

He added that he would "continue to work for the reconstruction of the state and the homeland, from either within or outside of power."

The prime minister, whose speech was broadcast by official Lebanese television, attacked "those who make accusations of corruption to cover up their own corruption and to stain others and society."

One member of Parliament Wednesday indirectly accused Mr. Hariri of corruption — without naming him — during the setting up of Solidere, the company overseeing reconstruction of Beirut.

It was Mr. Hariri's first public statement since he informed President Elias Hrawi of his "definitive wish to step down" during a stormy meeting of the cabinet.

However, the prime minister still had not formally presented his letter of resignation to the president, and would not do so until after talks with Syrian leaders in Damascus on Sunday, an advisor said.

Mr. Hariri is to meet Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Kaddam in Damascus, according to his advisor Nihad Mashnuq.

Analysts here believe that the final decision on his resignation will be taken by Damascus, which has 35,000 troops in Lebanon and pulls the political strings in Beirut.

A source close to Mr. Hariri said earlier he cited irreconcilable differences with House Speaker Nabih Berri and his supporters in the government, as the reason for offering his resignation.

Mr. Hrawi has refused to accept the resignation and Mr. Hariri responded by going home and refusing to work — the third time he has staged a one-man strike since becoming prime minister.

He stayed at home for a week last May, causing fears for Lebanon's future and a \$237 million run on the Lebanese pound.



Rafik Hariri

Mr. Hariri, whose personal fortune is estimated at \$4 billion, has launched an ambitious programme to rebuild Lebanon from the 1975-90 civil war and regain its role as a Middle East financial centre.

He has brought Lebanon monetary stability, a steady capital inflow and increased peace and security and has begun rebuilding roads, tele-

(Continued on page 7)

Majali returns after Ghana, Tunisia visits

U.N. university plans Amman centre; Tunisia talks next month

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali returned home Friday after a four-day tour which took him to Ghana and Tunisia. In Tunis, he met with Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali.

Dr. Majali also met with senior officials in Ghana and Tunisia for talks on bilateral relations and means of enhancing them.

Dr. Majali briefed these officials on the latest developments in the Middle East peace process and Jordan's role in bringing it to fruition.

In an arrival statement at Amman airport, Dr. Majali said his visit to Accra, the capital of Ghana, was extremely important since it accomplished something he

"worked for over the past 14 years."

Dr. Majali, who participated in the meetings of the board of trustees of the United Nations University, said the board had agreed to establish an academy in Amman to train junior government officials during 1995.

The academy would offer training to promising government leaders from 160 nations who would be discussing domestic, regional and international affairs.

The United Nations University was established in Japan in 1973 and started operations in 1975.

With lectures in English, French, and Spanish, the university provides post-graduate training to scholars from different countries with

special focus on the role and activities of the U.N. and its Charter.

The university aims at enabling the countries of the developing world to find proper means to settle their problems via help from advanced nations.

The university, which is funded by Japan, is governed by a board of directors comprised of 28 members appointed for a six-year term by the U.N. secretary general and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) director general.

Dr. Majali said that during his two-day visit to Ghana he met with the vice-president of Ghana and briefed him on the latest developments in the Middle East.

He said he and the Ghanaian official stressed the need to enhance cooperation between the two countries in various fields, noting that a delegation from Ghana will visit Jordan for talks in this regard.

The prime minister said Ghana was in need of qualified manpower and pointed out that Jordan was able to meet that need.

On his visit to Tunisia, Dr. Majali said he conveyed to Mr. Ben Ali verbal messages from His Majesty King Hussein and his Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

"I briefed His Excellency on all dimensions of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treat-

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28 in fair to serious condition after bus accident that killed 9

By Rama Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Twenty-eight survivors of a road accident that claimed the lives of nine people Thursday on a desert road in the south were listed in fair to serious condition Friday. Some accident victims were transferred to hospitals in Amman, Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police sources said.

The passengers, mostly Palestinian nationals, were travelling from the West Bank on their way to Saudi Arabia on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The accident, which occurred near Qatranah, 100 kilometres south of Amman, at about 4:30 p.m., was like many other before it, the result of speeding and dangerous overtaking, police said.

It took place when the driver of the 36-passenger bus Taleb Mustafa, overtook a vehicle and was speeding, said Colonel Hamad Ghazawi.

In a statement to Jordan Television Thursday, Col. Ghazawi said that the bus driver lost control of the bus, which overturned to its left side, and slid down for more than 100 metres before coming to a final stop.

All casualties were transferred to Karak government

and military hospitals by police and CDD rescue units. Nine were pronounced dead on arrival. A few cases were transferred to Amman by helicopters.

The dead were identified as: Dunia Mohammad Oseili, 35, Walid Saeed Smeirah, 42, Mariam Ahmad Abdul Hamid, 34, Abdullah Abdul Karim Abdullah, 29, Osama Mohammad Khleif, 31, Rabea Khatibeh, 24, Angel Abed Rabbu Abu Salab, 56, Zahra Mohammad Abdul Hamid, 44, and Awad Deeb Mohammad.

According to officials at Karak hospital, of 21 victims

(Continued on page 7)

Regent asks that victims get proper treatment

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Friday condoled the families of the victims of the accident and expressed deep sorrow and grief. He called on the concerned authorities to increase efforts to insure that all citizens are abiding by traffic safety regulations, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Prince Hassan instructed the governors of Amman, Zarqa, Karak, Ma'an and Irbid to visit the victims and to ensure that they receive the appropriate care.

Team back from Tel Aviv after scouting for embassy

By Caroline Faraj
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Jordanian Foreign Ministry delegation returned home from Tel Aviv on Monday after holding talks with Israeli officials on opening a Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv and leasing residences for the Jordanian ambassador and diplomats.

The head of the delegation, Omar Rifai, who heads a special bureau at the Foreign Ministry, said the delegation was familiarised during its two-day visit with places proposed to house the embassy and the residence of the ambassador to Israel as of Dec. 10, the deadline for the two countries to open embassies in accordance with the peace treaty signed between the two countries Oct. 26.

Mr. Rifai said it was not yet decided on the location of the embassy since the delegation stayed in Israel for a short period, but said it was natural for the embassy to be in northern Tel Aviv, adding that the ambassador's residence will be in Hertzliya area where other ambassadors in Israel reside.

Mr. Rifai said final arrangements for opening the Jordanian and Israeli embassies are being discussed.

sies and discussing other issues related to diplomatic matters during a three-day meeting between the two sides are due to open in Amman Sunday.

He said an Israeli delegation headed by a senior Israeli foreign ministry official, Yuri Halvon, will arrive in Amman to complete arrangements for renting the premises of the Israeli embassy in Amman.

Informed sources told the Jordan Times the two sides might rent suites at hotels to serve as embassies in view of the short period of time left for them to meet the Dec. 10 deadline.

The sources said they expected the celebrations marking the opening of embassies in the two countries would be limited to members of the diplomatic missions.

According to the sources, the Jordanian government has not yet received an Israeli nomination of its ambassador.

The sources said some of the persons suggested to serve as ambassador are: deputy head of the Israeli secret service Ephraim Halevy, foreign ministry spokesman Yusi Gal and Deputy Foreign Minister Eitan Ben Tzur.

Israel, Syria say no imposed deal

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Friday sought to put the onus back on Syria ahead of the seventh U.S. Middle East peace initiative year, saying no one could impose an agreement on Damascus.

"If Syria prefers the current situation, no one can impose peace on it," Mr. Rabin said. "The Syrians cannot impose peace on us and we cannot impose it on them."

The comment at a press lunch came after Syrian President Hafez Al Assad charged Israel was to blame for the stalemate and refused to make the next move.

"If it is imperative to choose between the current situation or accepting Israel's demands, I will choose the current situation," Mr. Assad said Thursday.

Mr. Rabin countered: "Assad's statement should neither particularly frighten nor appease us."

"I prefer to wait for Secretary of State Christopher to come and find out what the Syrians want."

Mr. Christopher is due in Israel and Syria between Tuesday and Thursday in a new bid to bridge the gap between the two enemies.

Mr. Rabin went on to renew complaints about the lack of "a negotiating channel with Damascus as with the Palestinians." He also criticised Syria for not "defining what they understand by peace and the price they are ready to pay."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said he was optimistic about prospects for peace with Syria despite the charges from President Assad.

"I am always an optimistic man, but I wish it could move a little bit quicker on the ground," Mr. Peres told Reuters in Budapest on the margins of a Socialist International meeting.

Mr. Assad also said on Thursday after talks in Damascus with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that Israel was making demands that were unacceptable to Syria.

Mr. Peres denied Israel had made any demands other than that negotiations be able to start without prior conditions.

"Israel has suggested to start negotiations without

(Continued on page 7)

Tzur calls for three Palestinian enclaves

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel should establish three major Palestinian enclaves free from Jewish settlements on the West Bank as a part of a final peace agreement, Agriculture Minister Yaakov Tzur said Friday.

"Inside these large enclaves, the settlements should be removed," Mr. Tzur said, adding to growing calls for some Jewish colonies to be dismantled for security reasons.

Mr. Tzur, known as a Labour Party "hawk," said that the three enclaves would cover half the West Bank, but he did not give any other detail.

Under the 1993 declaration of principles for autonomy, negotiations on a permanent agreement are not due to start until May 1996.

Israel is showing great reluctance to proceed to the next stage of Palestinian autonomy under which the army will pull out of Palestinian towns on the West Bank to allow elections to take place.

The military fears it will be impossible to protect the 120,000 settlers scattered across some 150 villages.

A major government debate is due to be held on Sunday on how to proceed with autonomy ahead of negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Cairo next week.

Settlers' leaders told AFP on Thursday that they have drawn up a plan to regroup the colonies for a final agreement.

Shilo Gal said that regrouping would create "a territorial unity between the different settlements, which is an advantage at the administrative and security levels."

"This plan calls for the construction of roads which by-pass Palestinian communities and link the different settlements, where security will be provided only by the Israeli army," he said.

On Wednesday, the chairman of Israel's powerful parliamentary committee for defence and foreign affairs, Ori Orr, also urged the government to group settlements in blocks to improve security.

"Small settlements spread across the West Bank and Gaza Strip should be grouped into zones which are easy to defend," Orr said.

Arafat and Hamas form panel to end differences

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat met with an Islamic opposition leader in Gaza Friday and formed a reconciliation committee to work out future differences and prevent violence.

The meeting between Mr. Arafat and Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar ended two weeks of tense uncertainty in the Gaza Strip, sparked by a bloody confrontation between PLO-led Palestine National Authority (PNA) police and Islamic activists on Nov. 18 that left 15 dead.

"Both sides agreed this morning that the most important thing is to try and overcome obstacles and conquer this crisis," said Arafat advisor Ahmad Tibi.

"The Palestinians cannot achieve peace without being unified," he added.

Mr. Arafat faced off against the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, after Israel demanded that he cracked down on militants responsible for attacks that left 32 Israelis dead in October and November alone.

Hamas and the more hard-line Islamic Jihad organisation oppose the peace accord that Israel signed with the Palestinians.

Mr. Arafat cannot afford to ignore the grassroots support for the militant groups, especially among the poor, and is trying to woo them into participating in his self-rule government.


Dr. Tibi said Friday's meeting was the start of a "real dialogue between the sides."

Another Israeli-Arab who served as a mediator, Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, called the meeting "a dash of hope for the Palestinians."

Mr. Darwish said that Hamas no longer rejected an Arafat-appointed judiciary probe in the Nov. 18 violence and had agreed to drop accusations blaming the PNA for the clashes until investigators published their results.

"It was a warm and fruitful meeting between myself and my brother and what we have agreed on is good for both sides," Dr. Zahar told the Associated Press.

Dr. Tibi said the nine-member committee, that includes Hamas and PLO officials as well as two Israeli Arabs, would meet Saturday.


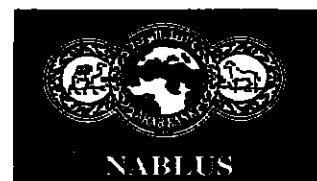



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Palestinian election crucial to peace process — experts

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Holding national elections for Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is the issue that will "make or break" the Middle East peace process, according to Saeb Erakat, chairman of the Palestinian Election Commission and minister of local government in the Palestinian Authority.

He said that if elections are not held in the near future, the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on implementing the Oslo accords will be derailed. "And if the Palestinian-Israeli track collapses," he warned, the remaining Arab-Israeli tracks would not come to fruition.

Dr. Erakat was the lead speaker at a symposium held Wednesday at Georgetown University and sponsored by the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine (CPAP) and the university's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS).

The other speakers included Professor Ziad Abu Amr of Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, Rabab Abdul Hadi of the Union of Palestinian Women's Association in North America, and Thomas O. Melia, director of Programmes of the National Democratic Institute in Washington.

The day's first salvo was fired by Dr. Hisham Sharabi, chairman of CPAP and a Georgetown University professor, on Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and head of the Palestine Authority, and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

He blamed the delay in implementing the Palestinian elections, one of the key points in the declaration of principles (DoP) signed between Israel and the PLO, on Mr. Arafat himself and "his autocratic, inept leadership" and on Rabin whom, Dr. Sharabi said, wants to continue the peace process yet "maintain the occupation of the West Bank and half of Gaza," where some Israeli settlements remain within the self-rule coastal strip.

Dr. Sharabi saw Mr. Arafat as failing to grasp "the gravity of the situation" and rather than mobilise the abundant Palestinian talent, "has chosen to surround himself with an ineffectual following of psychopaths and hangers-on who present no threat to his absolute power." He also accused the Rabin government of following the "traditional Zionist practice... of coercion, domination, and rejection of the Palestinians' rights."

He also expressed disappointment with the Clinton Administration's lukewarm commitment to Palestinian elections — a point shared by Erakat.

But Dr. Melia, who spoke about the experiences of their fledgling democracies, sought to correct this assessment. He pointed out that the U.S. government has contracted through the Agency for International Development with three nongovernmental organisations — The National Democratic Institute, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the International Republican Institute — to help Palestinians prepare for the elections. After the session, Dr. Melia reported he was flying to the West Bank that evening for this purpose.

Dr. Erakat recalled that

the DoP accord stipulated at least three prerequisites before elections can be held — Israeli military redeployment outside the urban centres, review of military laws and transfer of authority to the Palestinians.

But, he continued, the Israelis keep injecting new issues in their talks to the point that he is now not sure what they want. "We have done our homework," he continued and the Palestine Authority is ready to proceed forthwith.

Among the "delaying tactics" the Israelis have come up with, he mentioned are their demands that: — The proposed Palestinian council should have administrative and executive but not legislative powers. — Only those Palestinians who support the peace process should be allowed to vote.

— Amendment of the clause in the Palestinian charter which called for the elimination of Israel, and. — Any Israeli troop redeployment would be temporary and not permanent.

Dr. Erakat wondered aloud whether the Israelis who do not support the peace process would likewise be denied participation in the next Israeli general elections.

He went on to praise Egypt and the European Union — "our partners" — for their support in the Palestinian preparations for the elections and expressed regret that the American government was not as forthcoming.

"If we do not have elections as soon as possible," he continued, "the Israeli-Palestinian track will collapse." And, he warned, if that collapses, the other tracks, "even the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty," will not survive.

He briefly discussed the just-completed electoral law which he said was favourably received by European nations. The new law provides for a Central Electoral Commission formed of five members to be appointed by the PLO chairman; three senior Palestinian judges and two presidents of Palestinian universities.

He said all Palestinians 18 years or older and residing in the two Palestinian territories can vote.

The proposed council will have 100 members. Dr. Abu Amr reported on the effort of the Independent Group for Palestinian Elections and their proposed electoral system, which calls for the establishment of a 100-member council with two chambers, one executive of 20 members and the other, legislative, of the remaining members.

He said his group, formed of academicians and prominent Palestinians like Haidar Abdul Shafi, head of the Palestinian team to the Madrid peace conference, felt that such a council would allow opposition groups to participate without having to endorse the Oslo accord. Only the executive chamber will be bound by the Oslo agreement, Dr. Abu Amr explained.

He and Dr. Erakat reminded the audience that either electoral law is intended to cover the current interim period and a new electoral law will have to be worked out once the final status of the two occupied territories is determined.



'CENSORSHIP': Palestinians read a very rare copy of a daily paper in Gaza City as Palestinian police continue to confiscate newspapers. Distribution of Arabic-language dailies as well as the Jerusalem Post were confiscated

without any explanation as the Palestinian authority started a campaign of intimidation against the press in the Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

UAE urges dialogue on island dispute

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) marked 23-years of its independence on Friday with a call for a dialogue with Iran to resolve their dispute over three strategic Gulf islands.

President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan said the emirates wanted good relations with Tehran but it would pursue its bid to regain sovereignty on the tiny islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb.

"The UAE adopts a firm policy towards its neighbours based on brotherhood, forgiveness and good neighbourliness," he said in a national day address carried by the official news agency Wam.

"Within this framework, it reiterates its call for our brothers in Iran to resort to an objective and constructive dialogue or to international arbitration to resolve the problem of our occupied islands."

Iran has rebuffed the idea of international arbitration, saying the dispute must be tackled through direct negotiations.

Negotiations were held in Abu Dhabi in September 1992 but collapsed three days later after the UAE accused the Iranians of refusing to discuss the Tunbs.

The UAE later rejected an Iranian invitation for resumption of the talks in Tehran, saying it does not want any preconditions.

The dispute flared anew when the emirates charged Iranian authorities expelled hundreds of Arab citizens on Abu Musa and annexed the UAE part of the island they have shared under a British-brokered agreement since 1971.

More than 700 people live in Abu Musa, which is claimed by the emirate of Sharjah and has an area of around 25 square kilometres. The two other islands which

are claimed by the emirate Ras Al Khaimah and are uninhabited.

The three islands control the vital Hormuz Strait, the only gateway of the Gulf through which nearly one fifth of the world's oil supplies pass.

The dispute has hurt political ties between Iran and the UAE but trade has not been affected, with the Tehran remaining the top reexport market for the emirates.

The reexports surged to \$3.63 billion dirhams (\$989 million) in 1993 from 3.13 billion dirhams (\$852 million) in 1992 and 2.6 billion dirhams (\$708 million) in 1991.

Gulf Arab leaders, holding their annual summit in Bahrain on Dec. 19, are expected to renew calls on Iran to quit the islands, a position that has drawn sharp criticism from Tehran in the previous years.

The dispute was the subject of a three-day symposium held in Ras Al Khaimah this week under the auspices of the Cairo-based Arab League. The symposium ended on Thursday with recommendations for intensifying campaigns worldwide to force Iran to relinquish the islands.

"The participants call for more efforts to draw the attention of the world community and the United Nations Security Council that the continuation of the Iranian occupation of the Arab islands jeopardise Gulf and world security and stability," they said in a statement.

"They also call on all cultural, social and intellectual institutions in the region and outside it to increase their concern in this problem at all levels from next year and to introduce information about this national cause into Arab school syllabuses."

Israeli settlers said unsure of peace process

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Will the current Middle East peace process lead to a more stable Middle East? An Israeli settler currently visiting the U.S. isn't so sure.

Yisrael Harel, chairman of the Yeshua Council, a representative body for 140 Israeli communities, says that more than 300,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, are presently living in a state of uncertainty.

A Holocaust survivor and detainee in Cyprus following World War II, Mr. Harel is a novelist and former writer for Ma'ariv, Israel's largest newspaper. He is now an editor of Nekudah, an Israeli monthly magazine of political and social commentary.

Mr. Harel stressed that the Yeshua Council is not a political organisation. He described it as a collection of villages which have banded together for greater security. Villages councils, he said,

also have the authority to pass emergency legislation such as recent resolutions which welcomed Ethiopian and Russian refugees into local homes until they are able to be resettled by the State of Israel.

"Our main aim," he told reporters at the National Press Club Thursday, "is not to shape American policy but to see people (in the U.S.) who share our views."

Mr. Harel, who lives with his family in the West Bank settlement of Ofra, described the current Israeli-Palestinian peace plan, which proposes that land be exchanged for peace, as a process few Israelis see as painless. "Today, 15 months after the accord, morale is low in Israel, even among those who favoured the treaty," he reported.

Mr. Harel praised President Clinton for his understanding of Middle East issues after two years in office

and commended the President for making a trip to Israel. However, he rejected the idea of sending American troops to the Golan Heights.

"America should not intervene in Israel's fate. We don't want the U.S. (troops) to die for Israel," he said. "America is preoccupied with its own problems (and) some matters should be solved in Jerusalem in the Knesset, not (in) the U.S. Congress."

Mr. Harel also gave credit to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as "one who has made" a big historical move. But he expressed concern that "after 15 months, maybe (Rabin) made a mistake. Look at Israel on a map," he told the reporters. "For a country our size, there is no room for one mistake. When Israel signed the agreement with the PLO, (Rabin) was sure that after a few months Chairman Arafat would control Arab sections. But he

does not. Rabin is losing ground because of violence."

Mr. Harel also suggested that although Mr. Arafat as head of the Palestinian Authority was a logical choice, both he and Rabin may have signed their accord too soon — before working out security details in a satisfactory manner. It is not yet clear, he said, that the PLO chairman can retain the allegiance of the Palestinian Arabs he has claimed as his followers for so many years.

"I don't know what Mr. Arafat can do," he admitted. "If he goes to war and slaughters many Palestinians, he will fail. If he does not, he will fail anyway."

Mr. Harel suggested that Israel and the West Bank now have to think a bit more about what to do if Hamas, the Palestinian fundamentalist group which rejects Israel's right to exist, continues to gain ground on the PLO in the territories.

Lebanon becomes observer at OAS

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The Permanent Council of the Organisation of American States (OAS) on Wednesday approved a resolution granting observer status to Lebanon. Following is the text of the OAS announcement.

The government of Lebanon obtained today permanent observer status before

the Organisation of American States (OAS) and pledged to contribute to closer relations between the Middle Eastern nations and the 34 active members of the regional system.

The permanent council of the OAS approved today a resolution granting observer status to Lebanon, whose ambassador in Washington,

Riad Tabbarah, had underscored the importance of Lebanese communities throughout the Americas and the wishes of his country to fully participate in hemispheric cooperation programmes.

With the admission of Lebanon, there are now 32 observers before the OAS. The other ones are: Algeria,

Angola, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Morocco, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, and the European Community.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent condoles Iran over Iraqi

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has sent a cable of condolences to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani on the death of the Shiite leader, Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Al Iraki. The Regent expressed his deep grief at the passing away of the Shiite cleric, praying that God may bless his soul.

Islamic chamber of commerce in Niger

NIAMEY (R) — The Saudi president of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry arrived in Niger on Thursday at the head of the first delegation from the group to visit this impoverished West African country. Officials said Sheikh Ismael Abudawood's delegation included businessmen from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan. The chamber, affiliated to the Organisation of Islamic Conference which counts Niger as a member, was set up in 1978 to represent the private sector in Muslim countries and work towards creation of an Islamic common market. The delegation was to spend two days in Niger before travelling to Burkina Faso.

Iranian exiles want probe into writer's death

PARIS (R) — About 100 Iranian intellectuals in exile demanded on Thursday a United Nations probe into the death of dissident Iranian writer Ali Akbar Saidi Sirjani while in detention in Tehran. In a statement received in Paris, the signatories — writers, journalists, scientists and teachers — said the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and an independent team of world writers should investigate the death and report to the U.N. Commission for Human Rights within three months. If Tehran did not allow the probe, intellectuals should bring pressure on their governments to close down Iran's cultural offices and bureaux of the official Iranian news agency IRNA, they said. Several international human rights groups have already called for an independent investigation. Iran's official news agency IRNA has said Saidi Sirjani, who was reported to have died on Sunday of a heart attack in a Tehran hospital, was buried on Tuesday in Behesht-e Zahra cemetery south of Tehran in the presence of relatives and friends.

Turkish Cypriots act against Nadir bank

NICOSIA (R) — Turkish Cypriot authorities have obtained a court order against a bank owned by fugitive tycoon Asil Nadir for defaulting on \$4.2 million in deposits for a pension fund, a minister of the breakaway state said. "We have taken legal action to make sure this money is not lost. We are not sure if the assets of the bank will be enough to meet this amount, but we have taken action to save the money of the workers," Ozkan Murat told reporters on Thursday night. Mr. Murat serves as minister of labour and social security in northern Cyprus, which is a breakaway state occupied by Turkish troops since a 1974 invasion and recognised only by Turkey. Under the court order, Mr. Nadir will continue to operate the Kibris Endustri Bankasi but will not be able to sell its assets. Mr. Murat said the pension fund had deposited money to earn interest in the bank owned by Mr. Nadir, who fled to his native northern Cyprus in May 1993 after jumping bail in Britain to avoid facing trial on charges of theft and false accounting over his collapse fruit-to-electronics conglomerate Polly Peck. Mr. Nadir, under severe economic distress, has also suspended the purchase of citrus fruits from growers and will close down his citrus packaging and citrus juice extraction plants, his newspaper Kibris reported on Friday.

Samia Jamal dies at 70

CAIRO (AFP) — Samia Jamal, the famous Egyptian belly dancer, has passed away at the age of 70. Jamal, who has been suffering from cancer, died at her home in Cairo in a coma that she slipped after a surgery.

Ms. Jamal, popularly called by the Egyptians as the



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17:30 Un Pour Tous
18:00 Reportage
18:30 Le Vent De Mésopotamie
19:00 News in French
19:15 Grands Galops
19:30 Harry and the Hendersons
20:00 Combating AIDS
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:10 Murder She Wrote
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Firestorm"
23:00 Major Dad

PRAYER TIMES

04:53 Fair
06:14 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:25 Dhuhr
14:13 'Asr
16:36 Maghrib
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swethish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 623785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Epiphanius Church Tel. 771751
Assiout International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 629438
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Lutheran Day School Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 676691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures will continue to drop, so it will be cold, cloudy, and rainy with snow expected on over 1000-metre heights. Saturday evening, more is expected on over 800-metre heights with winds westerly to active. In Amman, skies will be cloudy with a chance of rain. Winds will be southerly active and seas rough.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Farouq Nour 786680
Dr. Raed Zaitoun 888685
Dr. Jihad Zydeh 881148
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairokh pharmacy 626722
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Akram Momani 248795
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Mufid Daima 985522

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 9, Aqaba 20 Humidity readings: Amman 95 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Highway Police 843402
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617100
Blood Bank 775121
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 610321
Hotel Complaints 602800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Repairs 633101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 615615

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81831/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642362
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714
St. Michael Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612727
Al-Ahl, Abdali 771013
Italian, Al-Mahajmen 6641646
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marks 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)98332
Al Hilman Modern Hospital (09)98732
Princess Basma Hospital (02)75355

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)32209-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:15 Agaba (RJ)
09:25 Dhahran (RJ)
09:40 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
10:25 Colombo (RJ)
10:50 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:00 Cairo (RJ)
17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:25 Vienna (OS)
15:45 Rome, Agaba (AZ)
18:15 Dubai (EK)
19:00 Sanaa (Y)
19:05 Larnaca (CY)
19:25 Beirut (ME)
21:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:00 Cairo (MS)
22:05 Athens (OA)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:25 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Agaba (RJ)
11:35 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
11:40 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:50 London (RJ)
13:00 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
19:45 Larnaca (RJ)
20:25 Jeddah (RJ)
20:30 Damascus (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
06:10 London (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 Beirut (ME)
12:50 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Beirut (EK)
20:00 Sanaa (Y)

MARKET PRICES

Upper lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 680
Banana (Mukammal) 630
Cabbage 300/200
Carrot 350/250
Cauliflower 300/200
Cucumber (large) 200/150
Cucumber (small) 100/200
Eggplant 250/180
Grapefruit 500/450
Grapefruit (small) 300/250
Lemon 200/150
Marrow (large) 200/150
Marrow (small) 100/200
Onion (dry) 220/200
Orange 350/250
Pepper (hot) 400/200
Pepper (sweet) 300/220
Potato 350/250
Spinach 350/250
Tomato 380/300

Regent seeks to establish Euro-Mideast cooperative security belt

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday said that during his recent European tour he sought to secure what he called a European-Middle Eastern security belt based on mutual cooperation and respect.

Addressing a ceremony at the Royal Command and Staff Academy for the graduation of its 35th class, Prince Hassan said that his meetings with European leaders constituted the first contact between Jordan and Europe after the conclusion of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and reaffirmed Amman's endeavours to enhance security and cooperation in the region and in collaboration with the European countries.

Jordan has proved by word and deed its commitment to democracy, security and respect for human rights and has taken practical steps towards enhancing peace worldwide through contributions to the U.N. peace keeping forces in Bosnia and elsewhere, said the Regent.

He said he has discussed with European leaders in Brussels economic aspects related to peace in the region and Europe's assistance to the Kingdom in the peace



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday addresses officers and new graduates of the Royal Staff College.

Referring to the international economic conference in Amman by the middle of 1995, the Regent said he invited the European nations to take active part in the meeting, which, he said, could pave the way for the first step towards security and cooperation between the Arab region and the European countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

Some are afraid of economic cooperation because they say that while the annual per capita income in Israel is \$13,000, in Jordan it is \$1,200, said the Regent.

But he said that this should not stand as an obstacle in the formation of a Middle Eastern economic market citing

the examples of Spain and Greece which, he said, joined the European Union (EU) with lower economic standards, but were not adversely affected by their European partners.

Congratulating the graduates, Prince Hassan urged them to remain committed to their duty and the service of their nation.

The Regent later distributed certificates and awards to the graduates.

Immediate prospects unclear of shekel entering Jordanian money market

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Although there are no legal hurdles to Jordanian moneychangers dealing in Israeli shekels, the extent of the currency's movement in Jordan is expected to be limited, given the reluctance of some of the Kingdom's exchangers.

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has affirmed that it finds no obstacles in Jordanian moneychangers including the shekel in the many regional and international currencies that they currently deal in, and that no specific law or amendment to existing law is needed to allow local exchange of the Israeli currency.

A CBJ official said Thursday that it was up to the moneychangers themselves to decide whether to deal in the Israeli currency and the central bank reserved its options whether to include the shekel in its daily listing of exchange rates that serve as a baseline for all currencies in the country.

However, some moneychangers asserted that the association of moneychangers in Jordan had taken a decision to

exclude dealings in shekels from their business. But others said it was only a matter of time before shekels find their way to the Jordanian market.

Those who oppose dealings in shekels say that the Israeli currency is strictly limited to dealings within Israel and has no regional value, at least until such time Israel makes peace with all the Arab countries and is accepted as a full partner in the economy of the Middle East and starts interaction with the Arab states.

"We have made peace, but it does not mean that we have to go overboard in trying to establish normal relations with Israel," said the owner of an exchange house, who, like others who talked to the Jordan Times, preferred anonymity.

The moneychanger was borrowing a leaf from the argument put up by opponents of the peace process who say that now that Jordan and Israel have signed a peace treaty, setting in course an irreversible process, the best they could do is to resist "normalisation" of relations with the Jewish state.

The underlying argument

behind some of those who reject dealings in shekels, according to market analysts, is that many of them would like to wait until the "normalisation" of relations takes its course and is completed.

"Apparently they want to sit on the fence without committing themselves," said a senior banking executive who deals in foreign currency.

Critics also argue that allowing shekels into the Jordanian exchange system might open the door for the currency to eventually dominate the region — a prospect that many others reject outright saying that such a course of events would be determined by pure economic and business sense.

"If indeed the shekel somehow finds its way to the top of Middle Eastern currencies against all other Arab currencies, then nobody could be blamed except banks and moneychangers," said the manager of a leading exchange firm in Amman.

"After all, if we are careful not to allow the shekel, or any other currency for that matter, to grow beyond proportions, then we cannot blame anyone

but ourselves," said the moneychanger. "It is up to us to adopt prudent monetary policies and economic measures to protect our own currencies, whether in the short, medium, or long term."

Fears of the shekel dominating the Middle East "have very little scientific base," said the banking executive. "Such apprehensions have more to do with a belief that Jews are better in doing business all over the world, and it is only a matter of time that they find some means of domination."

In the meantime, several moneychangers said they were approached by customers who wanted to exchange shekels and the absence of a clear exchange rate was the only factor that dissuaded the transactions taking place.

"I think 220 fils to a shekel is a realistic rate, while customers insist on 250 fils," said a moneychanger.

Four shekels to a Jordanian dinar is the general rate offered by Israeli shopkeepers to visitors; Palestinians who live in the occupied territories who might want to change shekels to dinars get a better rate.

Jordan urges U.N. aid to Arab peacemakers

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan has urged the United Nations to help the parties involved in the Middle East peace process consolidate their efforts and increase its assistance to Jordan and the other Arab states involved in the peace endeavours.

The call was made by Jordan's U.N. Ambassador to the United Nations Adnan Abu Odeh in an address to the U.N. General Assembly's 19th session in New York.

Peace cannot be achieved by mere words alone, but rather through development projects and financial aid, Mr. Abu Odeh said.

It is the masses that can consolidate the pillars of

peace, and these masses expect concrete benefits from peace in order to believe in it, he continued.

Jordan looks forward to a U.N. General Assembly resolution that would provide practical support and assistance to the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and Israeli-Palestinian peace, not only morally but also materially, said Mr. Abu Odeh.

Referring to the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, Mr. Abu Odeh said that it came in implementation of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and in the spirit of the Madrid conference which sought to end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Meteorologists forecast heavy rains and snow

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Meteorology Friday forecast heavy rain and snow in Jordan for Saturday and Sunday with temperatures ranging between 3°C at night rising to a maximum of 8°C during the day.

A department spokesman told the Jordan Times Friday that high winds will continue throughout the weekend, and snow, which expected to start falling Saturday in Amman, will intensify on Sunday.

He said that the heavy rains will inundate the low lying areas, and fog in mountainous regions will cause poor visibility.

He said that a highly concentrated atmospheric low

pressure affecting the entire eastern Mediterranean region will bring on the precipitation as well as very cold winds from the eastern European regions.

The department published rainfall measurements in Jordan since the start of the rainy season until Thursday showing that Ras Munif in the south received the highest amounts of rain at 226.4 millimetres, followed by Shobak with 172.5, Irbid with 150.3 and Amman with 111.4 millimetres.

Until Thursday, the total estimated amount of rainfall collected in the King Talal Dam was 42.1 million cubic metres (CMC).



COME RAIN OR SNOW: Traffic official Mohammed Salem Mohammed, braves chilling temperatures and continuous rain while on duty at Al Waha (Jubilee) Circle Friday, when traffic lights went out because of an electrical failure in that area. Officer Mohammad had been directing the traffic through the intersection of west Amman for four hours when this photo was taken. He said he would stay there until traffic lights started functioning again (Photo by Rama Hussein).

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives cable from Arab-Israels

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday received a cable from heads of the Arab communities in Israel, thanking him for the hospitality they were accorded in Amman on their way to Qatar. They also commended the King's efforts exerted to achieve peace in the region, noting that without these efforts, they would not have been able to visit their relatives in Qatar.

Germany grants JD 2.6m to Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — The German Agency for Technical

Cooperation (GTZ) is granting Jordan D.M 5.9 million (JD 2.625m) to help it carry out development plans in water, agriculture and health fields, under an agreement signed by the two sides Thursday.

Mikhail Halasa laid to rest

AMMAN (Petra) — Former Lower House of Parliament member Mikhail Halasa was laid to rest Friday. Mr. Halasa who passed away Thursday, had served as a diplomat at the Foreign Ministry and as a lawyer until he was elected to represent the Karak Governorate in Parliament in 1962.

Scholars to discuss regional ceramics of Byzantine, early Islamic period

By Khattab Salman
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An international colloquium on Byzantine and early Islamic ceramics in Syria-Jordan will be inaugurated Saturday, according to the British embassy in Amman.

The Amman-based British Institute for Archaeology and History and the Institut Français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient (IFAO) (Amman-Damascus-Beirut) are sponsoring the three-day event covering the fourth to eighth centuries A.D.

The opening ceremony will be under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumayah Bint Al Hassan and held at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Delegates from 17 different countries will take part in the colloquium comprising scholars who have been studying the ceramic record of this important transitional period over the last decade, said Estelle Villeneuve of the Institut Français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient.

"The colloquium is held in Jordan because there are more archaeological sites in Jordan than any other country in the region, in addition to the fact that more excavational works are taking place in Jordan," said Ms. Villeneuve.

The unprecedented event will gather local scholars from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and surrounding regions and is a representation of the efforts of a great variety of international scholars who work in Jordan, she said.

In addition to Ms. Villeneuve of the Damascus-based IFAO, the Colloquium is co-organised by Dr. Pamela Watson of the British Institute.

According to Ms. Villeneuve, much of the interpretation of archaeological information is dependent upon an adequate understanding of the regional pottery sequence, which is used as a tool for dating archaeological

deposits, a cultural indicator, and a means of tracing trade and exchange networks.

It is a basic building block upon which later archaeological and historical conclusions depend, she explained.

"The period defined by the colloquium, from the fourth to the eighth centuries A.D., covers the transition from Roman/Byzantine to Muslim rule in the Levant, a pivotal period in the region's history which still has ramifications for us today. In the present political climate, an awareness and understanding of origins and past processes can only add perspective and wisdom to our dealings with the present," Ms. Villeneuve said.

The Byzantine-Islamic period in Syria-Jordan is one of the richest and most accessible periods in the region's history. From the well-preserved desert cities of the semi-desert regions to the riches of the Umayyad castles, they form part of a visual

heritage that attracts admirers worldwide.

It is upon these monuments and their history that much of the future development and expansion of the modern tourist industry will depend, according to Ms. Villeneuve.

The first day of the colloquium will consist of three sessions in addition to the inaugural one. The stratigraphical and chronological approaches of these sessions will deal with the Byzantine and transition period of late Byzantine and early Islamic period in general.

On Sunday, the morning sessions will discuss the Umayyad and Abbasid periods; the afternoon agenda includes an excursion to archaeological sites in Madaba.

On the third day, participants will discuss specific issues of lamp and amphora productions, glazed, cream and fine wares of the different related periods.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

★ Polish comedy (with subtitles in English) entitled "VIP" at Goethe-Institut at 7:30 p.m.

CONCERT

★ Concert at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of portraits by Fahrelnissa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artists at Darat Al Fuman.

★ Exhibition of Muna Saudi's private collection at Abdoun Village.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Sadik Kwaish at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition by Akram Naji Shaker at Ab'ad Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of Pakistani art entitled "Colours and Forms" at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition by artists Latif Al Khateeb and Mubay Khateeb at the Housing Bank Gallery.

★ Motor show '95 at the International Motor Exhibition, airport highway.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Saadi Al Kaabi at Alia Art Gallery.

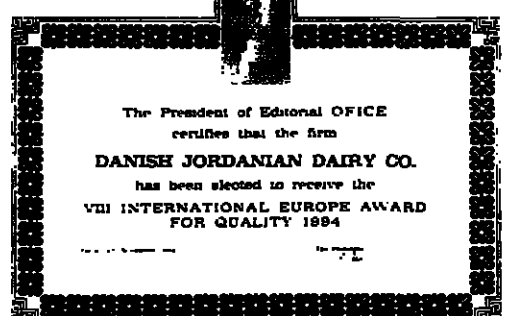
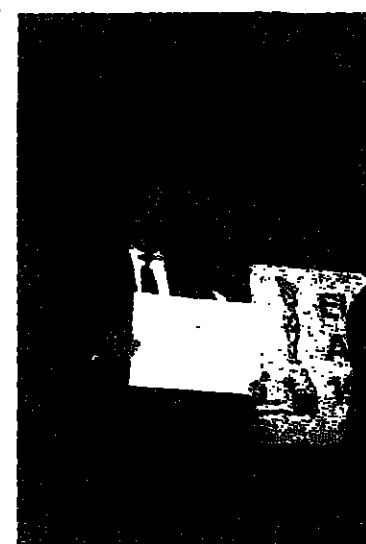
★ Exhibition of sculptures by Amer Khalil at Baladna Art Gallery.

Danish Jordanian Dairy "Karoline"

WINS

International Europe Award For Quality.

1994



It has been announced in Paris on 14/11/1994 that Danish Jordanian Dairy Co. has been awarded the VIII International Europe Award for Quality 1994. Danish Jordanian Dairy Co. was one among 158 winning companies from all over the world including three from Jordan specialized in Mechanics and Electricity. Such Certificates are usually granted to companies that keep their good Quality of products throughout the years.

Pictures above show:

- 1- The Certificate awarded to the Danish Jordanian Co.
- 2 & 3- Mr. Ahmed Deeb, Danish-Jordanian Co. Sales Manager receiving both the Certificate and the Cup.

Violence flares as Zedillo becomes Mexican president

MEXICO CITY (R) — President Ernesto Zedillo took office Thursday pledging to open Mexico's political system and strengthen the rule of law, but violent protests erupted and at least 40 people were injured, officials said.

After the inauguration, hundreds of anti-Zedillo leftists in the city centre threw rocks at club-wielding riot

police, setting ablaze an overturned police car and a truck bearing slogans of the president's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Protesters stoned fire officials trying to put out one of the fires. Red Cross Commander Ricardo Portugal told Reuters at least 40 people were injured, five seriously.

A photographer for Mex-

ico City daily La Jornada was badly beaten by police, according to the newspaper.

The injured were mostly protesters, but one fireman and several police were also among the wounded, Portugal said.

Witnesses said the violence flared as protesters, some masked and chanting "death to Zedillo," were blocked from approaching the historic city centre where the new president had been watching a military honour parade of tanks, fighter jets and soldiers.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Zedillo, a 42-year-old economist who won the country's Aug. 21 national election, was sworn in as president at the Mexican Congress.

He was given the red, white and green presidential sash by his predecessor Carlos Salinas de Gortari in a ceremony attended by 13 heads of state and U.S. Vice President Al Gore.

Mr. Zedillo became the 12th consecutive president from the PRI, which has ruled Mexico without interruption since 1929.

He promised to engage in open, equal dialogue with all political parties, and to clean up elections in Mexico which he said are marred by "suspicion, recrimination and mistrust."

Mr. Zedillo's vow of political reform came the day after he threw aside Mexican tradition by drafting an opposition politician, National Action Party (PAN) legislator Antonio Lozano, into his cabinet.

As attorney general, Mr.

Zedillo charged Mr. Lozano with pressing ahead with the investigation into the killings of former PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio and the party's Secretary General Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

Both were assassinated earlier this year in what many Mexicans believe was a power struggle within the ruling party, and Mr. Zedillo apparently gave his blessing to Mr. Lozano to take his probe into the heart of the PRI.

Mr. Zedillo's opponents in the leftist Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) held a midday meeting close to where the violence erupted to protest what they said was a fraudulent victory by Mr. Zedillo at the polls.

Some PRD legislators boycotted Mr. Zedillo's swearing-in ceremony in Congress, but it passed without the raucous protests that dogged Mr. Salinas' appearances there.

But the protests underscored how some Mexicans doubt Mr. Zedillo's vow on political reform after 65 years of one-party rule.

"I am determined to head the creation of a nation where the rule of law prevails, as all Mexicans deserve," Mr. Zedillo said in a 45-minute inauguration speech interrupted several times by standing ovations.

"I will do so by presiding over a government of laws within a framework of strengthened democracy which will renew the life of the republic, ensure participation, encourage respect and acknowledge plurality."



Anti-government demonstrators hurl rocks at riot police during violent clashes in downtown Mexico City. The demonstrations followed the inauguration ceremonies for Mexico's President Ernesto Zedillo (AFP photo)

Presley denies rumours of divorce from Jackson

NEW YORK (AFP) — Lisa Marie Presley sought to dispel rumours of an imminent break-up of her six-month-old marriage to pop star Michael Jackson, saying they were very happily married. "Once again, the media is being very irresponsible and spreading false rumours," Presley said. "Michael and I are very happily married... These rumours, in spite of their wishful and destructive thinking, are totally unfounded and false," she added. Earlier Jackson's spokesman had denied that the pop star plans to end the marriage, calling reports "an outrageous, 100 per cent, total lie." In London, the Daily Mirror had reported that Jackson wanted more independence and did not want Presley to stay in his apartment in Trump Towers in New York. The New York Daily News also reported that a breakup was planned but said Jackson was angered that his wife refused to leave California to live with him in New York. "He doesn't want to live in California. He said it's bad vibes, bad luck for him there," the Daily News quoted an associate of Jackson as saying. The reason for the alleged marriage break-up of Jackson and Presley is that her two young children cannot stand the sight of him, according to Friday's Daily Mirror. The superstar is "no hero" to five-year-old Danielle and two-year-old Ben, Presley's children from her previous marriage, according to the paper. And it said Presley is "very sensitive to their wants and feelings," quoting a Los Angeles source. He begged her to return to New York but she refused. "She would have done if the kids had said 'OK', but they wept bitterly and said 'No'," the source was quoted as saying.

Gere, Crawford breaking up

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Leading man Richard Gere and supermodel Cindy Crawford, whose marriage three years ago made them perhaps the most beautiful couple in Hollywood, have separated. The pair announced their breakup in a statement issued Thursday by their public relations firm. "This personal and painful decision was made between us in July," they said. "Since that time we have been trying to work things out, but due to the recent conjecture in the press, we have decided to make a statement at this time." Last month, a British tabloid published a photo of a woman hopping over Gere's garden wall. But model Laura Bailey said she was visiting a friend next door. Gere, 45, and Crawford, 28, married three years ago. There have been recurring rumours that each of them is gay and their marriage troubled. In May, the couple published a full-page ad in the Times of London, proclaiming their heterosexuality and their commitment to one another. Gere's acting credits include An Officer And A Gentleman and Pretty Woman. Crawford, a former top swimsuit model, is host of a fashion show on the MTV cable television network.

45 nations submit entries for Best Foreign film Oscar

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A record 45 nations have submitted entries for best foreign-language film Oscar, the highest honour bestowed by the American motion picture industry. The previous record was set in 1990 when 37 countries submitted films. Last year, 35 countries entered. "The number of entries directly reflects the changing face of the world map," Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences President Arthur Hiller said Thursday. "Both halves of the former Czechoslovakia have submitted pictures, and we have four entries this year from what was once the single nation of Yugoslavia." Mr. Hiller said. Nations entering films for the first time include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Cambodia and Guatemala. Nominations will be announced at the academy on Feb. 14. The 67th annual presentation of the awards will take place at the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium March 27.



Mexico's President Ernesto Zedillo (left) is congratulated by his predecessor Carlos Salinas shortly after receiving the presidential sash during his inauguration ceremony at the Congress building attended by several hundred foreign dignitaries and Mexican officials. The woman at centre is Carlota Vargas, president in turn of the Congress (AFP photo)



A Philippine Coast Guard personnel wipes off bunker off from two female survivors of the Cebu City ferry boat which sunk after it was rammed by a Singapore-registered Kota Suria cargo vessel before dawn at the mouth of Manila Bay (AFP photo)

Over 150 dead or missing in Manila Bay ship collision

MANILA (R) — At least 34 people drowned and about 120 were missing after an inter-island ferry and a container ship collided in darkness at the mouth of Manila Bay Friday, the Philippine Coast Guard said.

Navy and Coast Guard divers, who located the sunken ferry Cebu City in 26 metres of water, recovered 17 bodies but said more may yet be found.

"I think there are still some more bodies in the ship. That

is what we hear from the diver teams," Coast Guard spokesman Jaime Daquilanea said as darkness began to fall.

The discovery of people dead inside the 2,452 gross tonne Cebu City brought the death toll to 34 but around 120 people remained unaccounted for.

Rescue workers had given up hope that anybody who went down with the ferry could have survived inside an air pocket trapped in the ship, Mr. Daquilanea said.

Ferry owners William Lines said its latest estimate put the number of passengers, crew and families of crew aboard the vessel at 605.

Of those, 451 were rescued by the Singapore-flagged container ship Kota Suria immediately after the accident or by other vessels which raced to the scene of the accident in a busy shipping lane.

Scores of people managed to scramble from the ferry onto the Kota Suria after it dove into the starboard side of the Cebu City.

Others plunged into the waters of the bay to be picked up by rescue vessels. Many were drenched in fuel oil from the stricken ferry, which sank within minutes.



An injured survivor Erwin Miravilla, 28, is treated by a doctor after a group of 18 survivors from the sunken Cebu City ferry boat were rescued by Philippine Coast Guard (AFP photo)

Quebec leader has leg amputated

OTTAWA (R) — Quebec's most popular separatist leader had a leg amputated in emergency surgery and news reports said he was fighting for his life against a deadly flesh-eating disease.

Lucien Bouchard was in serious, but stable condition in intensive care at a Montreal hospital after doctors amputated his left leg, his press spokeswoman Marthe Lawrence said.

But the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported that Mr. Bouchard was

stricken with the streptococcus a bacteria and his condition was a matter of life and death.

Ms. Lawrence would not confirm the CBC report that Mr. Bouchard was afflicted by the uncommon disease known as necrotizing fasciitis, which rapidly destroys skin and tissue.

News of the amputation shocked Quebecers and threw the French-speaking province's separatist movement into disarray as it prepared to launch a campaign

for independence next year.

Political analysts said loss of the charismatic politician would be a serious blow to the separatist camp which is planning to hold a referendum in 1995 seeking a mandate to break away from Canada.

"I'm shattered... this is terrible," Quebec premier and fellow separatist Jacques Parizeau told a news conference in Quebec City. "All I can say is: 'Hang on old friend,'" he said, almost in tears.

India spy scandal increases tension with Pakistan

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Allegations of Pakistani rocket espionage in India are causing new friction between New Delhi and Islamabad, already at loggerheads over Kashmir and other key issues.

Indian newspapers Friday splashed lurid stories charging Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of planting two Maldivian women to obtain classified data from New Delhi and Islamabad, already at loggerheads over Kashmir and other key issues.

India officials refused to comment on the charge.

"The intelligence agencies have obtained clear proof that the racket is part of a Male-based Pakistani operation to infiltrate and sabotage the country's vital installations in the south," The Hindu newspaper said.

The vital data can help the recipient develop within three months the missile technology which has taken the Indians decades to formulate," The Asian Age added.

Nambi Narayanan, a senior official at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), was arrested by police in the southern city of Thiruvananthapuram Thursday for allegedly passing on secrets to the women against money and sex.

Another ISRO scientist, D. Sasikumar, and an Indian businessman representing the Russian space agency Glavkosmos here were detained. Police said at least 20 other people were involved in the scandal.

Clinton seeks \$25b defence increase

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton called for a modest \$25 billion increase in U.S. defence spending over six years to maintain the fighting readiness of America's shrinking post-cold war armed forces.

His announcement that he will ask Congress for the boost next month followed charges by Mr. Clinton's Republican opponents that military cuts in recent years had damaged the key U.S. principle of readiness to fight two major conflicts at once.

In addition to the \$25 billion increase over six years beginning in fiscal 1996, which starts next October, Mr. Clinton will ask for at least \$2 billion to pay for "unanticipated operations" this year in Haiti, the Gulf and elsewhere.

"I intend to ask Congress to add an additional \$25 billion to our planned defence budgets over the next six years," Mr. Clinton told a White House ceremony attended by Defence Secretary William Perry and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Republicans, who will take control of both houses of Congress in January after sweeping election gains in November, may press for

even greater increases in defence spending. Many charge that the Pentagon is not living up to its plan to fight and win two major conflicts virtually at once.

Republican Senator John McCain of Arizona, a member of the Armed Services Committee, said: "After two years of declining defence budgets in the Clinton administration, this is a small step in the right direction." But he added: "Unfortunately, it does not go far enough."

Mr. Clinton outlined what he called a five-part initiative to boost readiness and support military personnel, including plans to give troops full cost-of-living pay increases through the turn of the century.

"Our military will remain the best trained, the best equipped, the best prepared fighting force on earth," he said.

But neither Mr. Clinton nor defence officials made clear how the government, which is seeking to reduce deficit spending would pay for the increases in defence spending.

"I think this is a good move and I'm delighted the president made this decision,"

said outgoing Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat.

The \$25 billion increase is modest compared to the \$1.54 trillion total which the administration will now seek for the military from 1996 through 2001. But defence officials said it was important to fighting preparedness and the quality of life in the military.

There are currently 1.6 million men and women in the active U.S. Armed Forces and even with the increase proposed by Mr. Clinton, that total force will shrink to 1.45 million by the turn of the century under a long-range Pentagon plan.

Mr. Clinton's new plan would help the Pentagon meet what had been expected to be more than a \$40 billion shortfall in military spending over the next five years.

The Defence Department is already expected to announce cancellations or delays in some major weapons programmes in the coming weeks in order to leave more money for training and "quality of life" programmes such as housing for military personnel.

Europol widens scope despite EU rift over powers

BONN (R) — The European Union's embryonic police agency Europol is quietly cleaning paths through a crusty bureaucracy for European crime fighters despite deep political rifts over its future powers.

Europol chief Juergen Storbeck, who was previously with Germany's BKA federal police, says his agency is finding ways to boost European cooperation informally while it awaits a formal convention stalled by rows between the 12 EU states.

Based in the Hague, Europol started work in January under an interim accord between member states, but was limited to exchanging information between national police agencies until a convention is agreed that may give it a wider brief.

"In the meantime Europol has gained other tasks that are also supported by the ministers' accord but were not so specifically stated,"

Mr. Storbeck said in a speech late Thursday at the European Commission office in Bonn.

Germany is pressing for Europol to get wider powers, but a meeting of EU interior ministers this week ended in deadlock over the new agency's independence and whether its brief should be expanded to include terrorism.

Europol's stated tasks are to pass information between EU countries on drugs and money laundering crimes.

But Mr. Storbeck said Europol was now being asked by police agencies to coordinate investigations of related crimes in different countries.

"The way that happens is very simple. It starts with recognising that there are parallel investigations going on."

Another country get the information we would like at a particular time?" Mr. Storbeck said.

The result was that EU police agencies, divided by the gulf of languages, were turning to Europol as a "language bridge" in multinational probes of organised crime.

"Most interestingly, we have begun to support coordination of operative investigations, especially the coordination of so-called 'controlled deliveries'," he said.

Controlled deliveries are shipments of drugs that police shadow rather than seize immediately in order to trace the distribution route or identify gang members.

Europol has 30 liaison officers from national police and customs agencies, with each delegation having access through fast computer links to national data banks.

When investigators in Germany need background on a suspect from France or Eng-

land, they pass the request to the six Germans at Europol, who in turn ask their counterparts to consult their home records.

Mr. Storbeck said that before Europol, an international police query took an average of 14 days to pass through multiple offices and be translated back and forth.

He said this was much faster now because the Europol liaison officers worked closely in one building. They were not hamstrung by the need to communicate in a handful of official languages, but just agreed informally on English as a working tongue.

"We have handled 350 requests so far and most of them in three or four hours," he added.

Mr. Storbeck said he favoured creating an even faster European data bank on crimes. But that depends on whether the issue can be agreed between the EU governments.

U.N. calls halt to NATO air patrols over Bosnia

SARAJEVO (Agencies) —

U.N. peacekeepers said Friday NATO warplanes had stopped patrolling over Bosnia because of the threat to them from Bosnian Serb missiles, but NATO said it was still enforcing a no-fly zone over the former Yugoslav republic.

U.N. spokesman Wing Commander Timothy Hewlett said in Sarajevo NATO jets "stopped flying two days ago."

"Because of the engagements that happened in the last 10 days of November, we've agreed a cooling off period," Comm. Hewlett said. "NATO has stood down at our request."

But U.S. Captain Jim Mitchell told Reuters that NATO's Southern Command in Naples: "We are still enforcing the no-fly zone. I am not going to discuss the operational deployment of our aircraft but we have not stopped enforcing the no-fly zone."

Another U.N. spokesman at United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) headquarters in Sarajevo, Colonel Jan-Dirk Merveldt, said that no-fly enforcement "is not taking place over Bosnia but it is still taking place."

The AWACS (radar surveillance aircraft) are up in the air. They can still see inside (Bosnia) and (war) planes can be called in at any time they are needed."

Bosnian Serb missile batteries fired on NATO aircraft but missed at least twice in northwest Bosnia late last month while NATO and the U.N. wrangled in public over

air strikes against Serb forces attacking Bihac.

UNPROFOR, fearing Serb retaliation against its forces in Bosnia, restrained NATO commanders and refused to allow massive air raids to destroy Serb missile installations around Bihac.

The two international organisations and Western governments have been publicly at loggerheads for months over the use of NATO air power in Bosnia.

Comm. Hewlett said the Bosnian Serbs were well-equipped with SAM 2, 6 and 7 missiles and shot down a British Sea Harrier over Gorazde in eastern Bosnia last spring.

"(NATO) aircraft in the air have reported lock-on from the (SAM) radars all over the area," he added.

UNPROFOR said that since NATO regarded radar lock-on as a hostile act requiring intervention, peacekeepers wanted to avoid the risk of an escalation in the conflict with Serbs holding around 500 U.N. personnel hostage.

Meanwhile two missiles hit the Bosnian presidency in central Sarajevo Friday while U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi was in the building, as Bosnian Serbs stepped up military pressure in Bosnia amid fresh diplomatic efforts to end the war.

French U.N. Protection Force troops fired 90mm guns towards Serb lines after the strikes.

Foreign Ministers of the five nation "contact group" — Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States

— prepared to meet in Brussels to discuss proposals to allow a Serb confederation.

A missile hit the roof of the Bosnian presidency at 12:40 a.m. (11:40 GMT) and the other hit the first floor office of the speaker of the Bosnian parliament to the rear while the U.N. envoy was in the building for talks with Vice President Ejup Ganic. No casualties were immediately reported.

Mr. Akashi was in Sarajevo for talks with Bosnian officials and was planning to travel later to the Serb stronghold of Pale.

He had paid an earlier visit to the presidency to meet Mr. Ganic but left temporarily since Mr. Ganic was in a meeting with U.S. envoy Charles Redman.

Mr. Redman had left the building by the time the missiles struck.

A few minutes earlier another projectile, said by an UNPROFOR official on the spot to be a wire-guided anti-tank missile, had hit a building 150 metres from the presidency.

A Franco-British trip to Belgrade, getting mixed reactions from the Contact Group on Bosnia, was seen in London Friday as a sign of closeness between London and Paris as U.S.-British ties hit new lows.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and French counterpart Alain Juppe announced in Brussels Thursday they would fly to Belgrade Sunday for talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

The aim, they said, was to

try to revive an international peace plan for Bosnia by allowing the Bosnian Serbs to form a confederation with Serbia-dominated rump Yugoslavia.

There has been speculation in Brussels, where the five-nation contact group was preparing to meet Friday, that Mr. Hurd and Mr. Juppe would offer Belgrade an easing of international sanctions in return for recognition of Bosnia.

Both Mr. Hurd and Mr. Juppe have given their backing to the confederation plan as the centrepiece of a new diplomatic offensive born out of the West's inability to stop the fighting in Bosnia.

Mr. Hurd said any peace plan would have to involve a Serb withdrawal from some of the territory it has conquered in the 32-month conflict.

Belgrade leaders have expressed reservations over suggestions to link rump Yugoslavia — Serbia and Montenegro — with Bosnian Serbs in a confederation as part of a revised peace settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The idea was raised within the five-nation contact group seeking an end to the Bosnian conflict, which met Friday in Brussels. Under the suggestion, Bosnian Serbs would maintain formal links with Belgrade.

Bosnian Serbs and Muslims have exchanged the bodies of more than 80 soldiers killed during fierce fighting in the Muslim enclave of Bihac in northwest Bosnia. Serb sources said here Friday.

AIDS conference leaves fears of empty words

PARIS (R) — A 42-nation conference has approved a new global battle plan against AIDS, but activists and some delegates fear the accord will prove to be empty words.

Thousands demonstrated in Paris to demand concrete action as the gathering ended, some of them pushing empty wheelchairs or lying down on the street to stage a "die-in."

Some chanted: "We are dying, they are studying the problem" and "42 happy governments, the epidemic is exploding."

Meeting on World AIDS Day, a diverse group of leaders, health officials and other officials from 42 nations signed a declaration that "the AIDS pandemic, by virtue of its magnitude, constitutes a threat to humanity."

They pledged to make the fight against AIDS "a priority" while protecting individual rights and promoting condom use, education efforts and special protective programmes for women.

"The unequivocal signal that we have sent out today is that our words will be translated into action," said Health Minister Simone Veil at the close of the day-long event.

But some at the meeting — dubbed a "summit" by hosts France and the World Health Organisation though no head of state attended — said the accord was weak and had only symbolic value as it lacked enforcement.

"Nothing requires the people who sign the declaration to keep their promises. That's what we're afraid of," said Ivory Coast delegate Dominique Esmel, who is infected with AIDS.

"We are vulnerable to this being simply a photo opportunity. It would be a tragedy if it turned into a symbolic event," said Phill Wilson, a U.S. delegate who is also infected. "We are too far down the pike to still be doing awareness campaigns."

Many at the conference noted the accord endorses freedom of travel for those with AIDS, but some of the signing countries — including the United States and Japan — restrict entry by AIDS patients.

Asked to clarify the matter, U.S. Health Secretary Donna Shalala told reporters: "My signature cannot solve every problem. We cannot get political agreement on every point."

"Your signature means nothing," shouted out a young

French woman with AIDS.

"The content of the declaration shows no commitment," said Juvenal Ndayishimiye, founder of Burundi's first AIDS support group. "I found the language vague and imprecise."

At the start of the conference, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said it must declare a world emergency.

"AIDS is throwing the planet's social inequalities into relief by exacerbating them," he said. "Every day AIDS kills children, destroys families, drains economies, threatens communities. We must act without delay."

Senegalese Prime Minister Habib Thiam was grateful for the attention devoted to Africa — where 60 per cent of the world's AIDS-infected people live — but called for concrete action.

In the next decade, he said, nine million people will die in the 15 African countries worst hit by the disease, and the World Bank estimated that AIDS could cost Africa 22 per cent of its GNP over the next 20 years.

"There is no hope for Africa at the present if the declaration is not followed by tangible support for the nations most threatened," Mr. Thiam said.

Zambian Health Minister Michael Sata said Thursday industrialised countries have covered up the extent to which AIDS has spread among their population and the real rate of infection is much higher.

Western countries have found a much higher rate of AIDS infection in health service blood banks than has been officially admitted, and stocks have had to be destroyed, he said in an interview with Reuters.

"We in Africa have accepted that AIDS is here to stay. It's just like another disease," Mr. Sata said.

He called for increased local control of AIDS programmes in developing countries, saying people directly involved in the process could be more effective. Much of the money donated actually was spent back in the Western countries, which provided it, he added.

Meanwhile U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders called for increased AIDS awareness in high schools to better fight the fatal disease throughout the country.

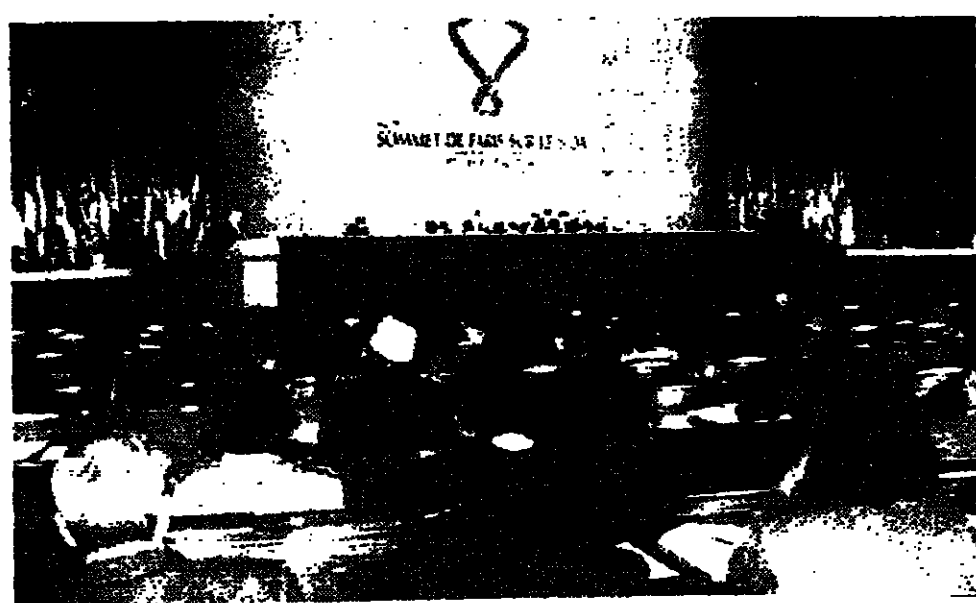
"Our people are not health literate. We've tried ignorance for hundreds of years. It is time to try education," Dr. Elders told a press conference at the United Nations World AIDS Day Thursday.

"Teaching abstinence is what everybody does. We need to build on it," she said. "To go into high school with only an abstinence mission, I feel we would be giving incomplete information."

Dr. Elders said she did not expect any hindrance to her AIDS programme from Republican lawmakers.

"I feel a Republican Congress is just as committed as a Democratic Congress... to fight this disease with everything they've got," she added.

But by stonewalling President Bill Clinton's health reform bill, Dr. Elders said, the Republicans would further strain "an already overcrowded, overburdened, and even under-educated Health Department."



General view of the first international political summit on AIDS, held in Paris (AFP photo)

Sinn Fein ready to discuss IRA disarmament

BELFAST (R) — A top Sinn Fein official said Friday that his party was ready to discuss the issue of surrendering IRA guns once historic talks with the British government begin next week.

"We're prepared, perfectly prepared, to discuss the issue of the amount of weapons that are in circulation in Ireland, both legal and illegal,"

Sinn Fein's Northern Chairman, Mitchell McLoughlin told BBC Radio.

His reference to legal and illegal arms echoed previous statements by Sinn Fein, political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), that it wants to link the surrender of IRA arms to a withdrawal of British troops from the province.

Britain, which announced Tuesday that it would hold exploratory talks with Sinn Fein on Dec. 7, says that progress towards a political settlement of the 25-year Northern Ireland conflict must include the surrender of guerrilla arms.

The Irish Republican Army is thought to have hundreds of tonnes of weapons in

caches in the Irish Republic. Its Protestant loyalist foes have fewer weapons, but Britain says their surrender is also paramount.

Mr. McLoughlin said that next Wednesday's Belfast meeting with British officials, the first official contact between the two sides, would be confined to setting an agenda for future talks.

Unlikely alliance set to sweep up in Italian polls

ROME (R) — An unlikely alliance between Italy's former Communist and the Popular Party (PPI), the successor to the once-mighty Christian Democrats who long shut them out of power, is expected to pay off in local elections Sunday.

Some 1.5 million Italians will elect mayors in 49 towns in a straight run-off following a first round of voting two weeks ago in which Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia took a drubbing.

The alliance between the ex-Communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) and the PPI worked well in the first round and could prompt closer cooperation between the opposition groups.

"I hope that this can pave the way for a future alliance governing the country," PDS leader Massimo D'Alema said as he joined PPI leader Rocco Buttiglione at a rally

in the southern town of Foglia.

Mr. D'Alema told Italian television he "didn't give a damn," when asked about Mr. Buttiglione's stated desire to work with Forza Italia in a future national coalition.

"Whatever Buttiglione says, in the provinces the Popular Party has allied with the PDS and has enjoyed notable successes," Mr. D'Alema told foreign journalists this week.

The Christian Democrats, once the mainstay of post-war government in Italy, transformed themselves into the PPI in January but were swept from power as Mr. Berlusconi triumphed in March general elections.

Defeat in those elections and a further setback at European elections in June led the PDS to appoint Mr. D'Alema as party leader in place of Achille Occhetto.

Mr. D'Alema is convinced the PDS, successor to the Western World's largest Marxist Party, must seek partners in the centre to win power.

The strategy was a success in the first round of the local polls on Nov. 20 when centre-left mayoral candidates won the biggest share of the vote in six of seven large towns involved.

A second round is not necessary in Pisa, one of those seven towns, where leftist Piero Fiorani was elected mayor after winning an outright majority on the first round.

Most attention is focused on the northern town of Brescia where former Christian Democrat leader Mino Martinazzoli seems set to defeat Northern League Industry Minister Vito Gnudi.

Mr. Martinazzoli won 41.1 per cent in a first round in which he enjoyed the backing

of the PDS as well as his own Popular Party.

Mr. Gnudi must make up some 15 points on Mr. Martinazzoli and his cause has not been helped by feuding between the League and the hard right National Alliance, uneasy partners in national government.

National Alliance candidate Viviana Beccalossi polled almost 12 per cent in Brescia but the party has refused to back Mr. Gnudi officially in the second round.

Meanwhile, Mr. Berlusconi, under investigation for suspected tax fraud, will be questioned by investigators in Milan early next week.

Mr. Berlusconi was informed on Nov. 22 that two companies in his Fininvest group were under investigation for allegedly paying bribes to tax inspectors for lenient audits.

Defiant Chechenya ignores Russian waverings

GROZNY (R) — Rebel Chechenya, saying that Moscow was not to be trusted, maintained its defiance Friday as Russia wavered in its resolve to crush fighting in the breakaway region by force.

"It is impossible to believe Russia. What she says in the morning, she contradicts in the evening. What she says in the evening, she contradicts in the morning," Chechen President Dzhokar Dudayev's chief adviser, Movlen Salamo, told Reuters.

Growing uncertainty in Kremlin statements since Thursday did little to stop hostilities on the ground. Unidentified warplanes flew over the Chechen capital Grozny overnight, attracting fierce bursts on anti-aircraft fire.

At least nine people have been killed in the past 24 hours during air raids by unidentified warplanes over Grozny, Western journalists said Friday.

The journalists counted nine bodies while examining the debris after air raids at 1 p.m. (1000 GMT) and 4 p.m. (1200 GMT) Thursday, and at 1.30 a.m. Friday (2200 GMT Thursday).

A bomb dropped during the first attack hit a bus, cutting a woman in half. Missiles fired during the afternoon raid apparently went astray, hitting Argun, an area 10-15 kilometres south-east of Grozny.

Western journalists said houses at Argun were badly damaged. One correspon-

dent saw eight mangled bodies laid out at private homes for funeral ceremonies. Local people said a total of eight people had been killed.

The night raid hit a disused former Soviet military building with two bombs. No official figures were available on casualties.

A Moscow television channel reported Friday that 50 people had been killed overnight during an air raid. The Two By Two commercial channel said 15 buildings were also destroyed. But this report was not carried by Russian news agencies.

"The situation will probably be clearer by evening," Mr. Salamo added. But he held out little hope that Russia would significantly change its original tough position.

A Russian parliamentary delegation held a second round of talks with Chechen leaders Friday. Discussions were to centre on the fate of 70 Russians captured in weekend fighting.

The Russian negotiators said here Friday at least some prisoners captured by the secessionist government's troops were regular Russian army soldiers.

Russian Deputy Anatoli Chabad made the announcement after a meeting with Mr. Dudayev.

President Boris Yeltsin had earlier threatened to impose a state of emergency on the region, which has been an irritant to Moscow since it declared independence three years ago.

Mr. Yeltsin said Tuesday

he would clamp down hard if the Chechen government and Moscow-backed opposition forces did not stop fighting and free prisoners within 48 hours.

But the deadline passed at dawn Thursday without an invasion by Russian forces massing on the border with Chechenya, which has a long, bloody history of resisting Moscow.

The first sign Mr. Yeltsin might be rethinking his strategy came when a senior presidential source told ITAR-TASS news agency the Kremlin leader would not sign a decree imposing a state of emergency on Chechenya in the very near future.

The suspiciously timed move, Mr. Yeltsin's original ultimatum to the two warring sides was reissued without the key phrase about introducing a state of emergency.

The Presidential Press Service said "certain discrepancies" had appeared in the mass media about provisions in the document.

The new version also dropped the words "all hope of internal solution has been exhausted." Sevodnya newspaper said the president's office had been correcting a "technical mistake."

Mr. Yeltsin might be remembering what happened in November 1991, when he slapped a state of emergency on the oil-refining republic and flew in troops.

Mr. Dudayev's forces blockaded the airport, forcing Mr. Yeltsin into a humiliating climb-down.

Also on Mr. Yeltsin's mind will be the fate of Russians whom Chechen forces captured during a failed opposition attempt to storm Grozny.

Russia has offered moral and financial support to opposition forces in Chechenya but has denied any military involvement, saying all Russians there went of their own accord.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev broke with this view Thursday when he admitted some of the captives were Russian servicemen.

On Monday Mr. Dudayev threatened to execute the captives. But he has since said they will be put on trial.

Moscow denies involvement in bombing raids on the outskirts of Grozny but a senior opposition official in Chechenya has conceded the planes were Russian.

The Russian delegation, upset by being caught in the Thursday night air raid, telephoned the Moscow Defence Ministry to find out whose planes were in the sky over Grozny.

They did not confirm there that the planes belonged to the Russian army. ITAR-TASS news agency quoted parliamentary Deputy Valentina Kovalyov as saying:

Mr. Dudayev, meanwhile, has moved his office to the safety of the basement at Grozny's vast Soviet-era presidential palace. A simple desk and the green flag of Chechenya compete for space with gurgling hot-water pipes.

Presley denies rumours of divorce from Jackson

NEW YORK (AP) — Elvis Presley's widow, Priscilla, said Friday she had no intention of divorcing him, despite rumours that she was planning to do so.

Priscilla, 34, said she had been married to Presley, 36, for 13 years and that she loved him very much.

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Vigil against disease

JORDAN'S OBSERVANCE of World AIDS Day Thursday was low key at best. The event received minimal coverage from the media and only muted concern was expressed by our institutions. This could be explained by the fact that the official figures about the number of people in Jordan who contracted the deadly disease is relatively small. The minister of health, Dr. Aref Batayneh, revealed on the occasion that only 116 people, residents of Jordan have the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, 34 of whom are non-Jordanians.

A better explanation, though, could be the cultural factor which inhibits a free flow of information about the highly communicable disease and how best to prevent it. Sex per se is still treated as a taboo, not to be discussed openly in society, especially with or among our youth. Schools barely mention the problem and if and when they do, it is done in such a way that it becomes ineffective.

To put the crisis in proper perspective, it is doubtful that the official figure released by the minister of health about the number of people in Jordan with AIDS tallies with the real number. It must be borne in mind that so many cases go unreported or, worst still, undetected. There are hardly routine blood examinations in the country that include the search for the presence of the fatal virus. There is also no campaign to encourage Jordanians to undertake such periodic tests. It stands to reason therefore that the problem in Jordan is much bigger than officially acknowledged.

We also seem to target non-Jordanians for close surveillance by requiring non-Jordanian workers to undergo blood tests for AIDS. This is ludicrous, since AIDS is not nationality oriented and does not respect boundary lines between nations. Thus we had better start thinking of a more comprehensive approach to check the spread of the disease by encouraging not only a more widespread blood testing but also by putting into effect a more meaningful campaign to combat it.

The country is on the threshold of a new era, when contacts with tourists and neighbours would increase by leaps and bounds, a process that necessitates and calls for a regional approach. It is necessary in this context to put in place a regional programme of action in which all the countries of the area take part. In the final analysis, World AIDS Day is not just a one-day affair but a continuous campaign to check the spread of the disease on a global scale.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily said that the rate of unemployed Jordanians was on the increase simply because the Jordanian government is allowing foreign workers to get the jobs that could easily be filled by local job seekers. Tareq Masarweh said that the Labour Ministry ought to impose restrictions on the employment of guest workers and force local employers to give priority to Jordanians. Jordan opens its doors to foreign workers at a time when young Jordanian men remain idle watching foreigners filling all kinds of jobs, charged the writer. He said that it is largely due to the low wages which are offered to the Egyptian workers that unemployment among Jordanians is on the increase. He said that school graduate can and should be given the chance to work at gas stations or stores and bakeries but the Labour Ministry ought at the same time to fix minimum wages, thus encouraging Jordanians to take up jobs now filled by foreigners. Furthermore, the Labour Ministry should ensure that only those jobs that could not be taken by Jordanians could be offered to foreigners for a limited period of time, demanded the writer.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour criticised government-sponsored propaganda about major potentials in the tourism industry as a result of the peace treaty with Israel. Samih Maaitah said that the Jordanian public has been repeatedly told that tourism will flourish as a result of the treaty and that the Jordanians' standard of living will improve as a result. But the writer said that Jordan has always been a country abounding with tourist attractions before the treaty has ever been contemplated and one should not expect huge numbers of Israelis to come here to cause prosperity in the tourism industry as anticipated or orchestrated by the official information services. One could expect a few thousand Israelis to come annually, but any income expected from their visit would surely be outweighed by the cost of services which Jordanian tourist facilities will have to incur, concluded the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Jordan is ready and willing, but are the Europeans?

THE WAY has been clearly laid for increased Jordanian-European cooperation and a higher-profile European involvement in the Middle East in general with the talks His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan had with senior officials of the 12-member European Union (EU) and the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, in Brussels last week.

It remains to be seen how far the EU is willing to go in realising the requirements of peace in the Middle East. Indeed, the commitment is there. The history of EU involvement in the peace process itself left a lot to be desired, but then there was a strong justification that it was an American game and Washington was setting the rules which did not allow much European or any other involvement in the actual Arab-Israeli negotiations. It holds true today that Europe may not be able to do much in breaking the Israeli-Syrian deadlock either. Hopefully, as things get along some formula would be found where Europe could play a stronger catalytic role in pushing the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli negotiations. In this context, the lifting of an eight-year arms embargo imposed by the EU against Syria was indeed a welcome development if only because it signals a much-needed shot in the arm for Damascus.

As far as one could remember, Jordan has always called for a strong European role in the Middle East, not only in the context of efforts to achieve Arab-Israeli peace but also in the quest for developing the region itself. By and large only a handful of the European states appeared to have been doing anything beyond vocal support for the Arab cause in the political context and seemed to be balking at intimate economic involvement with the countries of the region. Perhaps one could understand their hesitance in view of the tension and political and military uncertainties that reigned in the Middle East for more years than we could care or like to remember.

Now that peace is here, after the Palestinians opted for their own course of political actions to settle their dispute with Israel, we in Jordan believe that the Europeans should take a closer look at their links with the Kingdom.

Crown Prince Hassan, in his EU talks last week, not only brought the Europeans to take a closer look but also opened the door wide for them to step in and take advantage of the opportunities available in the Kingdom, as well as elsewhere in the region through Amman.

Granted that a sound investment climate coupled with political and economic stability and good prospects for returns are the key elements that invite foreign investment to any country. But government policies and approaches are vital to instil such private sector confidence. And that is where the EU governments should take the initiative.

Beyond what we see as the immense untapped resources and business opportunities that Jordan offers in a state of peace and tranquility, the Kingdom, by virtue of its

geopolitical features, also holds out all promises of a revival of its centuries-old role as a trade route linking the East with the West. This point has been made and accepted over the decades, but to our disappointment not much was done to capitalise on it.

We do appreciate that one of the key considerations that Europe would have while considering its political and economic links with any country is the extent of political stability that exists in the concerned country. We do not think that the Europeans need any reminder that Jordan is in the throes of democratisation far beyond any other country in the region and the Arab World in general and our leadership has made it more than abundantly clear that we have opted for democracy as a way of life and are on an irreversible path, or that Jordan is compared with some of the developed countries in terms of democracy rather than the countries of the Middle East. Indeed, there may be gaps here and there, but then we are only five years into a never-ending process.

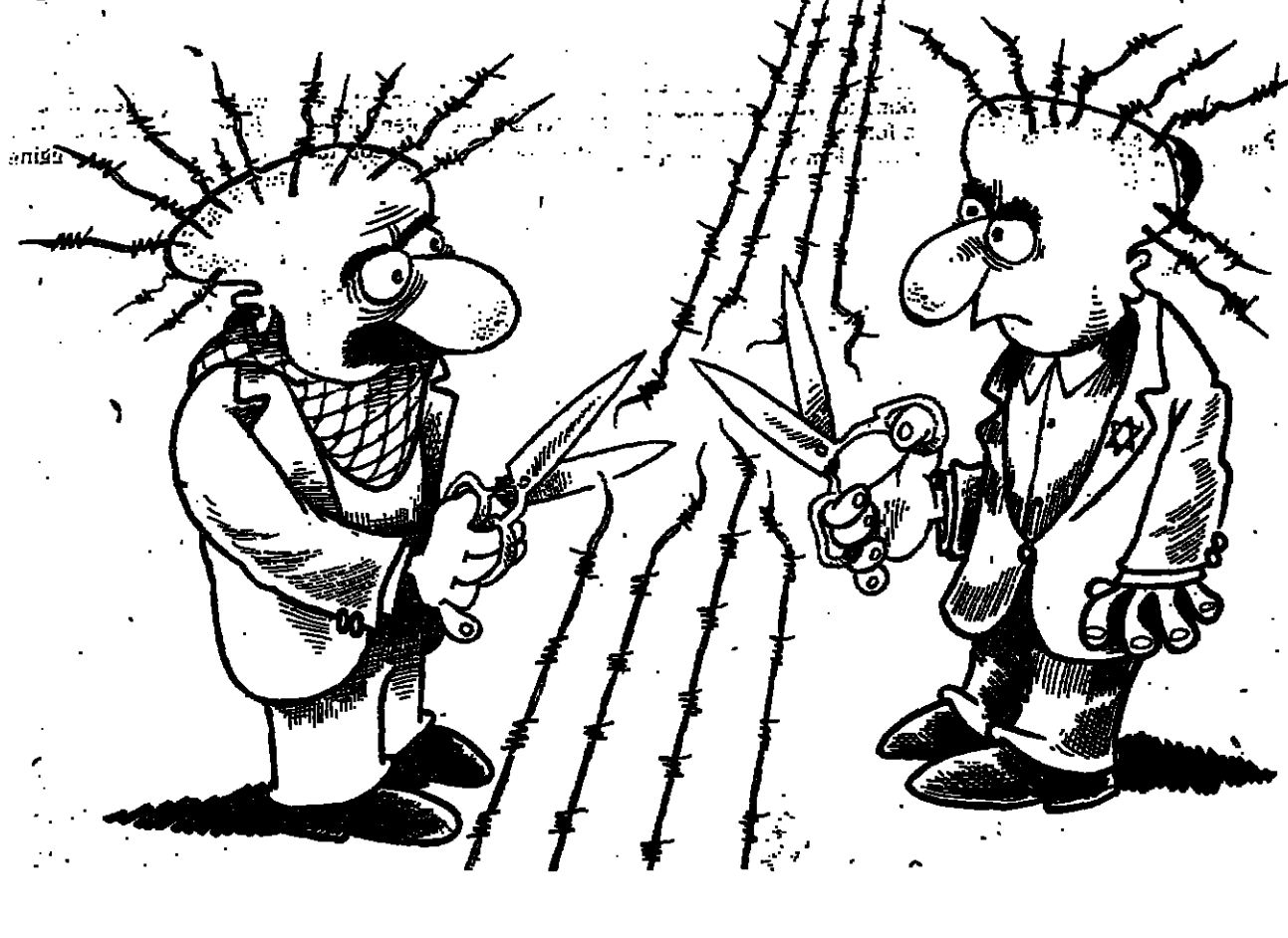
In essence, all the elements that not only Europe but also international community hold aloft as sacred principles of free life are present in Jordan and we are committed to nurturing them further for the sake of our own future and progress. It is not something that we adopted as a result of external or internal pressure. It was the natural course of action stemming from strong convictions and beliefs.

Over and above everything else, we have a political leadership which has proved its long vision and wisdom to the entire world.

The whole sum of what Jordan offers to Europe, which, arguably, understands the region better than our trans-Atlantic friends in the Americas, is simple and clear: We are a forward-looking country with proven credentials and an immense wealth of human resources. We have proved to be capable of not only surviving some of the worst crises that could ever hit a people and country but also have learnt a lot from our experience to realise and appreciate that there is nothing like self-reliance to achieve our national aspirations. We are on the road to achieving self-reliance but we need help along the way. We are improving the climate for investment in the country by removing all hurdles and increasing the incentives we offer. We are focusing on the private sector to play the major role in our economic development and are committed to bringing about a free market economy.

Indeed, it goes without saying that Europe, Japan and other friends of Jordan, foremost among them the United States, have extended and are extending help to us to achieve our goals. What we are trying to do now is to prepare ourselves and our friends to a course that goes hand in hand with the political changes that have been brought about by peace in the region so that time, the essence of all, is brought to our side of the bargain.

By KAHLE



A treaty must be more than words

By Kamal Naffa

AS A Jordanian American, I watched history, being made a few weeks ago while I was visiting relatives and friends in Jordan.

The peace treaty, signed by Jordan and Israel on Oct. 26, witnessed by President Clinton in Wadi-Ababa and ratified by both the "Israeli Knesset and the Jordanian Parliament, has paved the way for various modes of economic cooperation and trade, the exchange of ambassadors, bridge-crossing openings, tourism and joint projects to build a new, peaceful and prosperous Middle East after decades of hostility, wars, pain and deep suspicions.

But many Jordanians, including a former prime minister, opposed the treaty: 23 members of the 80-member Parliament including a powerful block of Muslim fundamentalists, voted against the treaty. Jordan, proud to call itself a democracy and a pluralistic society, experienced an intense of the accord with Israel. The forces of moderation and realism won, and immediately King Hussein joyously journeyed to the shores of the Sea of Galilee to exchange the ratification documents with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

In Jordan, there was a general acceptance of Israel as a neighbour, but no celebration. Many Jordanians welcomed the peace treaty in large measure because of their faith and trust in their popular leader, King Hussein. But it was guarded optimism. To suddenly celebrate a peace treaty after 50 years of animosity, wars, deep-seated suspicions and negative indoctrination was psychologically and emotionally not possible. What was possible, however, was the readiness of the people for peace.

Will the peace treaty endure? Yes, if certain conditions follow.

First comprehensive peace needs to be achieved. Peace with Jordan is conditional on meaningful full autonomy and self-determination for the Palestinians. Also, it is conditional on peace between Syria and Israel. Currently, Israel is negotiating peace treaties with each Arab state. But no lasting peace is possible unless a comprehensive peace is accomplished — soon.

Another condition for the peace process to work is speed. Islamic religious radicals are well-organised, well-financed and determined to wreck any reconciliation with the Jewish state. The best way to weaken their power is

for the peace treaty to start paying dividends as soon as possible.

Then there is a need for restitution. The Palestinians must be compensated for their losses. This is a monumental task that will involve the United States, the United Nations, Israel and Arab countries. The magnitude of this refugee problem is great; 457 Palestinian towns and villages have been destroyed by the Israeli authorities to make room for settlements since occupation of the West Bank in 1967.

Another condition for peace requires determining the fate of Jerusalem. This is possibly the thorniest problem. Because of the great emotional and religious attachment of the Jews and the Arabs to Jerusalem, the fate of this city could determine the fate of one or all of the peace accords. There is no reason why Jerusalem should not be the capital of both Israel and Palestine. However, it will take the wisdom of many Solomons to resolve it.

There is also a need to transform attitude and outlook. Both Arabs and Jews need to dispel their negative mythologies, stereotypes and fears and start seeing each other as human beings. Arabs need to accept that

even though Israel is an outpost of Western civilisation, there is much good in that tradition. Israelis must learn that although their neighbours have not yet been fully liberated from centuries of Ottoman and colonial rule, they are the heirs to a great civilisation that enriched and illuminated Europe in the Middle and Dark Ages.

Finally, there is the responsibility of the Arab and Jewish communities in the United States. The American Jewish community is very powerful politically, financially and socially; it has been and is still strongly committed to the state of Israel. A symposium of reconciliation and exploration of the possibilities of peace should be sponsored by the American Jewish community in cooperation with the American Arab community. This would be a fitting undertaking to advance the cause of peace by bringing together the best minds of both peoples for the first time in 50 years. A peace of dynamic active involvement by all would usher in a golden age in the biblical lands of milk and honey.

Kamal Naffa is a professor emeritus of philosophy at Fullerton College. The article is reprinted from the Los Angeles Times.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Poverty, absence of democratic institutions are reasons for violence in self-rule areas

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL Arabic dailies in the past week discussed the Middle East peace, the situation in Bosnia and domestic affairs. Laila Hmoud, a columnist in Al Ra'i said that in the wake of the peace treaty with Jordan, Israel ought to prove its good intentions and take the important step of repatriating the Palestinian refugees who lost their homes and lands since 1948.

The writer said that Israel recognises that it has been oppressing the Palestinians and causing their displacement since it occupied Palestinian lands in 1948, so it should offer compensation to those uprooted from their homeland if repatriation is impossible or if the refugees decline to return under the present circumstances.

Dr. Mohammad Qariouti, a columnist in Al Ra'i said that Israel should undertake measures to achieve a comprehensive peace on all fronts, now that it concluded a peace treaty with Jordan.

The writer said that Israel's harassment of the Palestinians over the presence of Orient House in Jerusalem and its continued repression against the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip do not help the cause of a comprehensive peace.

Taher Al Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, discussed Israel's continued attacks on Lebanese territory and the Palestinians under its rule, saying that these actions are dissipating the dream of real peace in the region.

The writer said that Israel is continually receiving assistance of all forms from the United States and the European nations, which helps it secure its hold on the Arab lands.

The absence of democratic institutions in the Palestinian lands and poverty are basic elements motivating the violence in the self-rule areas, while the continued Israeli occupation is causing the resistance to step up its actions against the Israelis, said Walid Abu Baker, a columnist in Al Dustour.

The writer said Hamas and the Palestine National Authority should open a dialogue to reach agreement on democratic rule rather than resort to confrontation.

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Furthermore, the Palestinians in Ain Al Hilweh Camp in South Lebanon ought to cope to understanding on democratic basis rather than attack on each other and shedding Palestinian blood, said the writer.

Any violence that takes the life of Palestinians is a gain for the Israelis and the continued occupation, he added.

Al Ra'i daily discussed the situation in Bosnia and said that the Serbs are committing genocide under the nose of the world community while the United Nations is shirking its responsibility towards the defenceless Muslims of Bosnia.

The paper said that the Europeans are finding pretexts for not interfering by force to end the Serbian aggression, thus allowing the women and children of Bosnia to face death and starvation.

Ibrahim Al Absi, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, stressed that the United States and the European nations can, if they want, end the Serbian aggression on Bosnia and stop the massacring of innocent civilians.

Absi said that after having committed itself to help the Bosnians, the NATO alliance backed away and found pretexts for shirking its humanitarian responsibility.

He expressed fear that the massacring of the Muslim people in Bosnia would mark the start of a genocide campaign against European Muslims.

Salameh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily, accused the government of neglecting its responsibility towards the agricultural sector in Jordan.

The writer said that Jordan should be enabled to produce sufficient cereals, vegetables, fruit and animal feed to save a fortune in hard currency, spent on importing these commodities.

He said that although the country is giving support for the industrial and services sectors, the government should not ignore agriculture and should encourage the farmers to produce commodities which are in high demand and ensure food security for the Kingdom.

While U.N. debates its mission, Serbs virtually close it down

By Robert H. Reid
The Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — While the United Nations deliberates whether to continue operations in Bosnia, the Bosnian Serbs basically have decided the issue. They have virtually closed the mission down.

Consider: — Delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians is basic to the U.N. mission. But Bosnian Serbs have refused to approve convoys through their territory.

— Sarajevo depends on the U.N. airbridge for 80 per cent of its supplies. For more than a week, the up-again, down-again airlift has not flown because the Serbs refuse to approve flights. To reinforce the message, the Serbs deployed surface-to-air missiles in the air corridor approaching Sarajevo.

— More than 400 peacekeepers, including French, British, Dutch, Canadians and Ukrainians, have been taken hostage against future NATO strikes.

Apart from delivering humanitarian aid, the U.N. mission is supposed to enforce agreements. Such as those on removal of heavy weapons from the Sarajevo area and on protection of U.N. "safe areas."

Those military functions have been severely curtailed. The United Nations is unable even to get permission from the Bosnian Serbs to resupply its own units in isolated Muslim enclaves such as Bihac and Srebrenica.

Most of the detained peacekeepers were guarding

collection points in the Sarajevo area, where Bosnian Serbs stored heavy guns after last February's NATO ultimatum to remove such weapons from within 20 kilometres of Sarajevo.

Both the Bosnian Serb and government forces routinely have put banned weapons in the zone. Apart from bluff and bluster, the U.N. has found no tools to force compliance.

Last week, Bosnian Serb soldiers simply drove up to the nine collection points and surrounded them, trapping the peacekeepers inside. The presence of U.N. hostages virtually guarantees no NATO air strikes to follow three last week.

U.N. relations with both sides have been touchy, and are getting worse. The Serbs are in a position to punish the United Nations.

Sources who attended a U.N. staff meeting Thursday quoted the commander for Bosnia, Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Rose, as saying that the Bosnian Serbs "have declared war" on the United Nations.

On Wednesday, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic refused to meet U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali at the Sarajevo airport.

Mr. Ghali had come to Sarajevo to warn the two sides that the United Nations might pull out of Bosnia-Herzegovina entirely if they did not cooperate with the peacekeepers.

U.N. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, say they fear the Bosnian Serbs have decided to step up harassment in hopes the U.N. packs up and leaves.

Inter-seas canal projects — leading the future by the hand

By Ludwig W. Tamari

THE DEAD Sea is as old as history. It has been scientifically established that the catchment areas of the Dead Sea that is Jordan, Palestine and Israel of today, go back to about 500 million years.

The Jordan River is the main-source of fresh water feeding the sea, and for millennia fresh water from rain and streams from Mount Nebo carrying salt from rocks and soil has flown through the Jordan Rift Valley into the Dead Sea.

The Dead Sea was mentioned in the Old Testament, and the Holy Koran. It was described by Romans, Greeks and Arabs as the Sea of Sodom, Dragon, Araba, Asphalt and Lot. The Dead Sea is also known as the lowest point on earth, which is 392 metres below sea level, and the world's saltiest "lake", where salinity reaches about 300 per litre.

The Dead Sea waters were stirred to life as early as the times of the Prophet Ezekiel. The concept of water from the great sea pouring into the Dead Sea basin has been the subject of some of the oldest religious beliefs in the world. In the book of Ezekiel, in Chapter 47, it is written that "this water will go out to the eastern region and down into the Araba and into the sea; and when it enters the stagnant waters of the sea the water shall be healed... it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Ein Gedi to Ein Eglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. The fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the great sea, very many. But the swamps and marshes shall not be healed, they will be left for salt."

The plans for the life-restoring project of having Mediterranean Sea water in the Dead Sea has had receptive ears in the religious communities. But the people of that time had neither the power nor the technical know-how to make the dream of bringing life to the Dead Sea possible. We do, and it is now possible to fulfil the dream of the prophets in the land of the prophets.

The occupation of Egypt and the Levant by Napoleon in 1798 managed to enhance the geo-political importance of the Dead Sea and the Jordan Rift Valley. The predictions of the Prophet Ezekiel, all of a sudden, became a poignant revelation in the arsenal of the European colonial powers. The French, during their short sojourn in Egypt, were contemplating the feasibility of linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea through the Suez Isthmus.

Not to be outdone, the British, took to consider seriously the building of a canal from Haifa, on the Mediterranean, to the Jordan Valley, creating a huge lake that would include the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea — and then connect this giant inland sea with the Red Sea, thus bringing together the waters of the three seas in one sweep: The Mediterranean with the Dead Sea and the Red Sea.

The goal was to cut a new passage to India, so that the British empire could more easily and quickly service and protect its overseas possessions.

Early surveys and reports on the British plan demonstrated very little concern for the problems that would be caused by the new "lake," which would inundate Tiberias, Beit Shean and Jericho — the oldest town in the world. The British then believed that since the Turkish sultan controlled the lands of Palestine and Jordan, he could be persuaded to give concessions in exchange for a few modest favours. The sultan turned down the British overtures.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the barometer of political tension between Britain and France was marked by the dictates of nationalistic euphoria. And as the British realised it was impossible to go through with the Haifa canal, the French came to realise that the prospect of a canal through the Suez Isthmus is far-fetched.

Among other obstacles, was the believed difference of about 30 feet between the level of the Mediterranean and the Red Seas. During Napoleon's occupation of Egypt, Engineer Charles Le Pere was sent from France to study the possibility of a canal. Not knowing how to deal with the differences in the levels of the two seas, Le Pere recommended against the Suez Canal and advocated the rebuilding of the famous inland canal of the pharaohs, first built about 4000 years ago and connecting a branch of the Nile with the Red Sea.

But the remarkable and resourceful Ferdinand de Lesseps soon appeared on the scene and history was changed. De Lesseps turned the first spadeful of sand on the project in April 1859, and what had seemed an impossibility was completed and in service ten years later. It is hard to imagine world shipping and trade without the marvel of the Suez Canal.

Concurrently, the opening of the Suez Canal brought about ripples upon ripples of strategic changes and challenges between the imperialists of Europe.

In fact, historians and power-politics mavericks will not be off tangent should they

maintain that what precipitated the creation of the state of Israel, in the wake of World War I, was basically motivated by strategic considerations, rather than the concern of Britain over the welfare of World Jewry. The need to protect the left bank of the Suez Canal became Britain's top priority.

With the creation of the state of Israel, the economic potentials from the realisation of connecting the Mediterranean Sea or the Red Sea with the Dead Sea came under focus.

After years of consideration of all kinds of proposals, the Israeli government, in 1978, set up a series of official studies and structures to find a solid answer to whether such canals could actually be built. The Israeli government required that the studies be based on sound data and that they recommend the best route of the seven proposed Med-Dead routes for such a canal. The studies were to be accompanied by test boring, cost-benefit analyses, a summary of political considerations, proposed budgets and detailed construction time tables.

One hundred million dollar were raised by Israeli bonds to fund the project, and the MDS Co. (Mediterranean-Dead Sea Company) was established by the government in 1981.

From 1981 to 1984 the MDS made a thorough survey of the engineering problems that would accompany the project, with special emphasis on the probable environmental impact of building the canals, that is the Med-Dead and the Red-Dead as an alternative.

The MDS studied not only the Dead Sea area, but the entire region both above and below ground. Construction time was estimated then at about nine years, with a total cost projection placed at about \$2 billion.

The euphoria which propelled the drive to go through with the inter-sea canal ran out of steam in 1984. In fact, in 1986 the Knesset dismantled and completely closed the MDS. The reasons given then by the Israeli government were flimsy, in effect they were purely geo-political.

While researching the literature on the subject, two prominent names involved in the MDS kept cropping up. One was that of Donald Melnick, project manager of B.W. Engineers, the American company engaged to do the comprehensive feasibility review report. Mr. Melnick's laconic comment on the reasons which brought about the dismantling of the project could be summed up as follows "....the principle reason was based solely on the cost-sale of electricity... meaning

that the project is not economically feasible and that it will not pay for itself."

Assuming that this is true, unfortunately no thought was given to the many and significant ancillary benefits of the project.

On the other hand, one of the advocates of the project, Shlomo Drori, who could not remain silent, wrote in depth on the merits of the subject on what is good in it for Israel. Here are excerpted passages by Mr. Drori:

"...The importance of the inter-sea canal... is not so much its ability to supply Israel with cheap electricity, but rather first and foremost to provide cheap electricity... to Jordan..."

"Indeed, the inter-sea canal might very well represent a force which will ultimately topple the diplomatic brick walls that mar and distort the geopolitical expanse, that is the Middle East."

"The inter-sea canal is... not a project situated solely in Israeli territory, but a project which will transform the border between Israel and Jordan, from Eilat and Aqaba to the Dead Sea into an international region."

By internationalising the project, Mr. Drori was prophesying the heralding of the state of Palestine which stands to participate and share in the benefits.

With the pertinency of the clairvoyant, Mr. Drori added "...The primary objective needn't be the development of Israel, but rather the development of Jordan... Jordan is blessed with rich potash and phosphate deposits and therefore cheap electricity could very well make her the leading supplier of chemical fertilisers for the Arab and Muslim worlds. Bromine extracted from the Dead Sea, coupled with cheap electricity could also enable Jordan to supply needed agricultural pesticides to the entire Arab World... etc."

In the meantime, and with subdued eloquence, Jordanian scientists, economists, water, energy and mineral resources experts have been working for years on a major plan for the Wadi Araba and the Kingdom's whole water system.

While Israeli experts were thinking of the Med-dead canal, Jordanian experts were contemplating the advisability of concentrating on the Red Sea — Dead Sea canal project.

The generally accepted plans, by both Jordan and Israel, for the construction of the inter-seas canal projects are being considered along the following lines:

1. Bring sea water from the Gulf of Aqaba through the Wadi Araba via surface canals.

2. Tunnelling will be required through the Thalweg hump between the two bodies of water. International tunnel-boring experts are confident of the viability of this part of the project.

3. After seventeen years, the flow from the Red Sea will be reduced using a recycling system of pumping water from the Dead Sea up to the huge reservoirs above the power station, and holding it there until it is readily needed.

4. If necessary, extend a wide, navigable channel some distance north from Eilat and Aqaba for the construction of an industrial port at a distance from the beaches and resort areas on the present Red Sea shore.

5. Build one or more large lagoons along the way for recreation... something akin to an international free zone "riviera".

6. Use the water for cooling thermal power station along the route. The water from the projects therefore, can be put to good use without deleterious effects.

7. Build fish hatcheries and fisheries along the length of the channel.

8. Plan for the establishment of communities along the channel in what would otherwise be uninhabited desert areas.

9. Establish growing fields for salt-resistant plants.

10. Continue experimental desalination plants, possibly in connection with the cooling towers in which water is heated to steam.

In addition to the overall positive aspects to be realised by the construction of the project are the potential benefits to the region-of the generation of hydroelectric power, of which there are primarily three:

1. Constructing solar ponds for storing energy. Both Jordan and Israel have a long history of work in this field and have amassed a great deal of applied experience. It is estimated that about 60 per cent of all Israeli apartments use solar energy. In Jordan, the percentage is modest; yet the demand is catching on.

2. Huge, natural solar energy-collecting potential of the Dead Sea itself; oceanographers and other water scientists maintain that the lighter, that is less dense salinity from the Mediterranean Sea for or the Red Sea will stay in a layer on top of the heavy, dense Dead Sea water. This would present the perfect conditions for solar energy collection. And it has been visualised by a number of scientists that eventually this would have an impact on the weather conditions and in turn could influence the physical aspect of the Dead Sea basin.

3. Stop the shrinking of the Dead Sea which continues to lose more than five feet of depth every year. The shrinking process has been aggravated by Israel as a result of its diversion of Galilee, Jordan, Yarmouk and other waters for irrigation.

One of the highlights of the recent peace treaty between Jordan and Israel is that it put an end to the thorny issue of water rights by regulating each country's entitlement, and focused again on the need to consider seriously the merits of the "projects".

And barring the adverse effects on the ecology, the projects, if either one is completed, would come to mean a new way of life, hopefully for the better, for the peoples of the region.

Granted that there is a strong hesitancy to engage in a Red-Dead or Med-Dead project due to potential environmental damage. But the potential damage remains unknown, except to say that the impact of the misuse of resources in the region today has already endangered the Dead Sea and its environs.

Nonetheless, to go through with the project of building dams, boring canals through humps and hills, digging out lagoons etc. could endanger

the cultural and historical nature of the area, and possibly destroy the aquifers or even worsen the presence of subterranean vaults of fossil fuels; in particular, natural gas.

To leave things as they are means to ignore the causes of the present untenable situation. It is a must therefore that sound management of the resources of the region undertaken — if only to head off the furthering of damage of leaving things as they are.

When and if the inter-seas canal project is proven to be viable, it must be perceived as an international undertaking to be owned jointly by Jordan, Palestine and Israel. The funding should be provided by six sources; Jordan, Palestine, Israel, the World Bank, foreign governments and private investors.

The viability of the "canal projects", and eventual realisation, should not be assessed by anything like the accuracy found in the facts and factors of science and technology alone, but also in terms of the triumph of human wills over the ominous dictates of domination by force, bias, hatred, prejudice and discrimination.

Should this come to pass, it will be another first in the history of man where he succeeds to lead his own future by the hand towards a cornucopia of peace and plenty.

Dr. Irvin S. Yerworth and Dr. Oumeish Y. Oumeish contributed to this article.

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To leave things as they are means to ignore the causes of the present untenable situation. It is a must therefore that sound management of the resources of the region undertaken — if only to head off the furthering of damage of leaving things as they are.

When and if the inter-seas canal project is proven to be viable, it must be perceived as an international undertaking to be owned jointly by Jordan, Palestine and Israel. The funding should be provided by six sources; Jordan, Palestine, Israel, the World Bank, foreign governments and private investors.

The viability of the "canal projects", and eventual realisation, should not be assessed by anything like the accuracy found in the facts and factors of science and technology alone, but also in terms of the triumph of human wills over the ominous dictates of domination by force, bias, hatred, prejudice and discrimination.

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28 listed fair to serious

(Continued from page 1)

were admitted there on Thursday, 12 had left and the rest are expected to be released in the next few days.

"We received four bodies and the other five were transferred to the military hospital because there was no space in our hospital, and two other victims were transferred to hospitals in Amman," the hospital official told the Jordan Times Friday.

This is the third tragic bus accident to have been reported in Jordan in the past seven months.

On May 1, a bus collision on the Amman-Madaba road claimed the lives of ten people, and left 15 injured. The accident was blamed on dangerous overtaking by a water tanker driver who attempted to overtake a passenger vehicle and met head-on with the bus.

On June 27, an accident that involved three vehicles, two passenger buses and a tractor that was carrying six passengers, left 31 people dead and more than 90 people injured, in one of the worst accidents to be reported in the Kingdom this year.

According to recent numbers released by the Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents (SPRA), which organised a march last September to stop road accidents, 24,799 road accidents claimed the lives of 440 people and left 11,754 injured in 1993.

The past five years, 1,950 people were killed as a result of road accidents in Jordan.

Hariri resignation 'final'

(Continued from page 1)

phones and electricity services and other utilities.

But he has repeatedly clashed with parliament under Mr. Berri, a civil war militia chieftain.

Pro-Berri ministers in the government were always against Mr. Hariri, a source close to the prime minister said.

"How can Hariri rule with Berri always against him? Berri's ministers are always against Hariri," the source said.

"The simmering conflict between Hariri and Berri seems to have exploded," an analyst told Reuters.

"It is rivalry, nothing else. Berri is a very ambitious man. So is Hariri in another way. Berri wants the final say in everything and hides be-

hind parliament's authority." Parliament turned down Mr. Hariri's request for special powers to push ahead with reconstruction when he took office in 1992.

It is refusing urgent passage of Mr. Hariri's \$11.38 billion Horizon 2000 plan to rebuild Lebanon in 10 years.

Majali returns after visits

(Continued from page 1)

ty and he expressed satisfaction over the treaty and appreciation of the stands of His Majesty King Hussein and the position of Jordan on various issues," said Dr. Majali.

He said that he also met with the Tunisian prime minister, Hamed Al Qurawi, and agreed with him to enhance relations between the two countries, noting that a higher Jordanian-Tunisian joint committee headed by the prime ministers of the two countries will hold its first meeting next month.

Israel and Syria spar

(Continued from page 1)

prior conditions where any party can express its own views and no party can impose its views on the other," he said.

"President Assad is asking that before the negotiations will start Israel will accept the full position of Syria."

Mr. Peres later told a news conference that Israel would neither put conditions on Syria nor accept them from Syria. He urged Mr. Assad to embrace the chance for peace, saying that Damascus was 15 years behind Cairo in benefiting from peace with Israel.

"The greatest help they can get is from peace itself," Mr. Peres said. "Peace is a great donation even in economic terms. I am afraid that Syria is 15 years behind Sadat," he said of late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat who signed the Camp David accord.

On Friday, Syria's government-run Al Thawra daily accused Israel of continuing to pursue "war and aggression" to intimidate the Arabs into peace on its terms.

Israel and Syria spar

(Continued from page 1)

each other."

Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's U.S. ambassador and a leading negotiator with the Syrians, said it was up to Mr. Christopher to rescue the faltering peace process.

"It is very important that he be successful in saving the gloomy atmosphere that has formed around the negotiations," Mr. Rabinovich said on army radio.

Mr. Rabin faces strong opposition in Israel to any peace deal.

Benjamin Begin, a leading lawmaker from the right-wing Likud opposition, told army radio that military intelligence believed Mr. Assad still sought Israel's destruction.

"Under such conditions, when this is the Syrian strategy, it is hard to understand why people with even minimal logic could even think about any withdrawal from the Golan," said Mr. Begin.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin issued his own warning as both sides dug in their heels.

"The Syrian president is mistaken if he thinks he can secure any more concessions before mid-1995, a deadline for making the most out of the chances for peace," said Mr. Beilin.

He was referring to the start of the pre-election period.

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Lebanon raises minimum wage

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese government, in a late night session before announcement of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri's surprise resignation tender, ordered a 25 per cent minimum wage increase for public and private sector workers.

The decision, taken Thursday, raised the minimum wage from Jan. 1 to 250,000 liras (\$151) from 200,000 liras.

Labour Minister Abdullah Al Amin said workers who were paid more than the minimum wage would get a 20 per cent increase. All workers would receive child schooling and transport allowances.

Sources close to billionaire Hariri said Friday he told President Elias Hrawi during the cabinet meeting he was resigning over irreconcilable differences with parliament speaker Nabih Berri and his supporters in the cabinet.

Mr. Hrawi turned down the resignation but Mr. Hariri was said to be refusing to work and was staying at home.

Mr. Amin said he feared workers would not be satisfied with the increase but the government could not offer more.

The raise fell short of demands by the General Labour Confederation (CGTL) for an 88 per cent raise backdated to July for Lebanon's estimated 350,000 private sector and 120,000 public sector workers.

Workers Tuesday staged a 24-hour warning strike, the first against Mr. Hariri's two-year-old government.

CGTL president Elias Abu Rizk had threatened to escalate strikes and protests if the demands were not fully met. "I don't expect the union to be satisfied with what has been decided," Mr. Amin said after the cabinet session. "All these increases are not enough. What the cabinet decided may not, from a practical point of view, be enough to meet living conditions... but this is reality."

Mr. Hariri said in September that Lebanon's workers deserved higher pay to offset rising prices but said he would do nothing to endanger monetary stability in the country.

A large pay rise would increase the soaring internal

debt and threaten the efforts of the cash-strapped government to curb the budget deficit.

Interior Minister Michel Al Murr said the government "gave what it could without hurting the economic situation."

Mr. Amin said a committee of seven ministers, three CGTL members and three representatives of employers, would "meet periodically and whenever needed to discuss living conditions."

He also announced the formation of a "price index" committee to begin work on Jan. 1.

Workers would also receive schooling allowances between 200,000 and 500,000 liras per child per annum for a maximum of three children — and transport allowances of 2,000 liras for each working day for one year only, Mr. Amin said.

The last pay hike in January raised the minimum wage to 200,000 liras for both public sector employees and private sector workers.

Bread riots that erupted in May 1992 during street demonstrations called by the CGTL amid soaring inflation and the collapse of the Lebanese lira forced the government of then prime minister Omar Karami to step down.

Meanwhile, Beirut's foreign exchange market opened steady Friday and dealers said there was no panic run on the Lebanese lira after Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri's surprise resignation offer.

The lira opened at 1,655,167 to the dollar, the same price as Thursday's closing. Dealers said they were waiting to see how the situation developed.

"We will watch the market... but there is no reason to panic yet," a dealer told Reuters.

"I want to see if the resignation is sustained as this has happened in the past," the dealer said. "If it is a prolonged situation there may be repercussions in financial and foreign exchange markets."

Asked if people were selling lira for dollars, another dealer said: "Not very much. People are taking it more calmly than last time."

Merrill Lynch takes neutral view of the dollar against European currencies

The following report, covering the period from Thursday Nov. 24, 1994 until Nov. 30, 1994, is provided by Naser Nabulsi, private client group at Merrill Lynch-Dubai.

Overview

Fundamental View: It appears increasingly likely the dollar has bottomed against the Deutschmark following the Republican victory in U.S. elections in early November and the Fed's 75 basis point rate hike on Nov. 15. The Fed's move toward restrictive policy has increased confidence among market participants that the Fed is serious about slowing the economy and will take whatever action is needed in coming quarters to slow economic growth to under 2.5 per cent.

We are changing our forecast toward a neutral view of the dollar against European currencies, with the centre of gravity for the DM/USD rate expected to be in the DM/USD 1.55 to 1.60 range for the next 12 months. A move toward tighter monetary policy in Germany sometime next year is likely to keep the dollar from rallying strongly against the Deutschmark.

We have not changed our forecast for the dollar against the yen, which has typically been far less sensitive to interest rate developments than the European currencies. We continue to expect that the reluctance of Japanese investors to finance the nation's current account surplus will bring further upward pressure on the yen in 1995 and look for the yen to trade at JPY/USD 92 in 12 months.

Technical View: It is getting redundant, but the week ending Nov. 25 was the fifth consecutive weekly gain for the U.S. dollar index. Although medium term momentum remains generally constructive, short term oscillators are overbought and are beginning to deteriorate. This, plus recent sentiment deterioration, suggests that a pullback may be developing. At this point, the long term (post-February) downtrend remains intact, with long term resistance in the 89.00-91.00 range. We are inclined to raise first support to the 87.00 area on the premise that a break of that level will confirm that a correction is under way; benchmark support exists at 84.91.

Japanese yen

Fundamental View: Mounting bullish sentiment toward the dollar has helped lift the dollar to the JPY/USD 98 level following the Republican victory in U.S. mid-term elections and the Fed's larger-than-expected 75 basis point rate hike on Nov. 15. News that U.S. GDP in the third quarter was up at a 3.9 per cent annual rate and that American consumer confidence is on the rise again has also been viewed as a plus for the dollar, by implying that still more Fed tightening will be needed next year. Another potential positive for the dollar is that U.S. capital outflows could begin to slow as mutual fund investors slow or reverse their purchase of mutual funds and being to keep their money close to home in the form of CDs.

All of these factors may convince the speculative community to borrow yen to buy dollars, which could also give the dollar a bit of a boost in the near term. That said, we think that any potential dollar rally against the yen is likely to be short-lived because of the reluctance and inability of Japanese investors to finance trade deficits of the U.S. and other dollar-linked currencies. Net private capital outflows from Japan continue to run far below the nation's current account surplus.

So even though the surplus is beginning to contract, downward pressure on the dollar could persist for some time. Expectations of our economists in Tokyo that the Bank of Japan will raise interest rates by 100 points over the next year are also a potential negative for the dollar, as are concerns that U.S. politics could turn highly confrontational next year as Republican revisit Whitewater and related investigations. We continue to expect the dollar to trade as low as JPY/USD 92 yen over the next 6-to-12 months.

Deutschmark

Fundamental View: The dollar has traded up to the DM/USD 1.57 level in recent days, and it looks increasingly likely that the sweeping Republican victory in U.S. mid-term elections and the Fed's larger-than-expected rate 75 basis point rate hike on Nov. 15 have helped the dollar to bottom out against the interest-rate sensitive European currencies. Market participants now seem more inclined to believe that the Fed means business in its turn toward more restrictive monetary policy.

An example of this is that news that U.S. growth was a stronger-than-expected 3.9 per cent in the third quarter was interpreted as a plus for the dollar in foreign exchange markets, presumably because it gives the Fed justification for further tightening. A few weeks back, the interpretation might have been that it was proof that the Fed was still behind the curve in controlling inflation. Indications that U.S. mutual fund investors are beginning to shun mutual funds in favour of CDs for other safe havens is also a plus for

the dollar since it suggests that American capital outflows, which have been largely via mutual funds, may soon slow if not reverse.

This is not to say that the dollar is completely out of the woods: Recent comments by Bundesbank officials indicate that the Bundesbank favours a strong mark and we expect Germany to begin pushing up its repo rate by the middle of next year, which would not be a plus for the dollar. We are moving toward a neutral position on the dollar, and now project that dollar will trade with a centre of gravity in the DM/USD 1.55 to 1.60 range over the next 12 months.

Technical View: The Deutschmark declined 0.3 per cent against the U.S. dollar last week. Sentiment is neutral, but improving. Momentum is moving toward neutral, and still seems to have the potential to remain under pressure until well into 1995. This, plus the current testing of trend support, would suggest the existence of a potentially important top.

As a result, the likelihood of lower D-mark levels over the next three to six months still appears to be fairly strong. Even so, a decline through 1.58 DM/USD area still seems needed to actually reverse the uptrend and fully substantiate the action of momentum. Important resistance remains at 1.488; the currency recently tested that level, and a penetration would allow for at least a challenge of 1.39.

Against the yen, the D-mark was essentially unchanged last week. Medium term oscillators have broken down, suggesting a potential test of the lows of the long term trading range. That range generates support at 59-60, with resistance above 88.50.

Pound sterling

Fundamental View: The British pound dropped a notch against the dollar to trade around U.S./GBP 1.58. The pound got a marginal boost against the Deutschmark to rise above DM/GBP 2.45 level following the presentation of the U.K. budget in line with market expectations. The budget was viewed in the market as prudent and cautious and underscored Chancellor Ken Clarke's commitment to a low inflation strategy, reviving speculation of an early rate rise in the U.K.

The U.K. economy is putting up one of the best performance in a generation. Real growth is up 3.8 per cent to the third quarter. Inflation is the lowest in over 30 years, the PSBR continues to narrow and is expected to come in significantly below the government's 38 billion pounds target for fiscal year 1994-95, and the current account position is improving (deficit projected to decrease from 1.8 per cent of GDP to 1 per cent). A risk factor for the pound is that the economy will be near full capacity by mid-1995, which suggests an uptick in inflation.

Given strong fundamentals, we continue to have a positive outlook on the pound and expect it to appreciate against the Deutschmark as both the nominal and real interest rate differentials move in favour of the pound. Following the revision of our dollar forecast against the mark, we expect the dollar to strengthen against the pound to U.S./GBP 1.50 in months and U.S./GBP 1.55 in six months.

Technical View: The British pound lost 0.4 per cent versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Nov. 25. Sentiment continues to improve and is neutral. Momentum is reversing to the downside, and the currency has been testing 1.57 U.S./£ support. With further weakness still likely in coming weeks, the rally trend appears complete and suggests a continued decline toward 1.55. The trading range support remains at 1.48. Resistance exists at 1.643.

Against the DM, sterling fell 0.2 per cent last week. Momentum is beginning to show signs of deterioration, and the inability to rally through 2.44-2.47 in coming weeks could suggest an imminent medium term peak. Support exists at 2.38-2.41.

Swiss franc

Fundamental View: The Swiss franc followed the Deutschmark lower against the dollar and is currently trading near S.F./U.S.\$ 1.33. The franc, like the mark, spent most of this year steadily appreciating against the dollar before selling off during November — on Nov. 1 the franc was trading at S.F./U.S.\$ 1.245. The franc has also been depreciating against the Deutschmark since the beginning of October. Though we had expected the franc to weaken against the mark, the speed of this depreciation has been rather surprising.

The franc is currently trading near S.F./DM 0.85 compared to its low of 0.8275 on Oct. 7. The catalyst for this sharp sell-off was the decision by the Swiss National Bank to allow short-term money rates to fall over 25 basis points since the beginning of October. In the very near term, the franc may receive a boost from profit taking as the franc appears oversold.

Looking ahead, however, we expect further weakness. Diverging inflation rates in the coming year and concerns over monetary policy are likely to lead the S.F./DM to 0.88

in 12-months time. In line with our revised Deutschmark-dollar forecast that looks for further near-term dollar strength, we now expect the franc to be weaker against the dollar in the next few months before recovering to trade near its current level in the second-half of 1995.

Technical View: The Swiss franc fell 0.2 per cent versus the greenback during the week ended Nov. 25. Sentiment has improved to neutral and momentum is weak. However, the basic uptrend from the beginning of the year remains intact. Support exists at 1.547. Benchmark resistance remains at 1.23-1.26 S.F./U.S.\$.

Canadian dollar

Fundamental View: A better-than-expected real GDP report and a much improved current account deficit for the third quarter provided the Canadian dollar with a little respite following two weeks of steady depreciation. Third-quarter real growth came in at an impressive 4.7 per cent rate following a robust 6.4 per cent rate for the second quarter. Canada's trade surplus doubled in the third quarter causing the current account deficit to fall to C\$5.1 billion from C\$7.6 billion in the second quarter. That is the lowest current account deficit in four years.

These fundamentals are bullish for the Canadian dollar and should help push the C\$ toward our twelve-month forecast of C\$/U.S.\$ 1.28 from its current level of C\$/U.S.\$ 1.37. However, investors appear to be on a lending strike, which may continue until convincing evidence emerges that provincial and federal government budget deficits are being reduced significantly — probably the biggest concern for bond market investors.

Technical View: The Canadian dollar fell 0.6 per cent against the U.S. dollar last week, making it the weakest of the six currencies we most regularly discuss. Sentiment readings have improved in recent weeks and are viewed as neutral. Momentum, which confirmed the recent rally highs, is deteriorating. This confirmation along with the penetration of the 1991-1984 downtrend, suggests eventual higher highs following the current weakness. The April-August trading range should provide important and ample support at 1.37-1.40 C\$/U.S.\$.

Australian dollar

Fundamental View: The Australian dollar continues to be strong against the dollar trading above U.S./A\$ 0.785 level. Over the past year, strong economic growth, high real interest rates and rising world commodity prices have driven the A\$ steadily upward from its September 1993 low of U.S./A\$0.642. Third-quarter real GDP grew at 8.4 per cent year-on-year, well above market expectations of 5.7-to-5.9 per cent. RBA Governor Fraser attacked the stance of fiscal policy, warning about the risk of wage escalation.

Our A\$ outlook is for continued appreciation through the first-half of next year to U.S./A\$ 0.78-80.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR DECEMBER 3, 1994

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Don't permit a private concern to deter you from accomplishing the goals you want to achieve today. Expect for things to get off course this evening but have an alternative plan to put into effect.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a fine day to forget about any long trips which could get you into trouble. After lunch you should go out for pleasure.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You are not certain about some responsibility in the morning so study well, then you can get business matters working well.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Some needling on the part of a partner should be discounted, and later you can sit down together and come to an agreement on what is to be done.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Some new idea could be confusing, so study it well, and then it can become advantageous to you for some future project.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Steer clear of pleasure in the morning, and later you can enjoy that entertainment you have in mind, since the planets are then favourable.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Meet with partners and make plans for the future. Don't make a comment which could spoil your chances for greater success later.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get your duties handled well, and then take care of your correspondence wisely. Avoid one who is a trouble maker who wants to create problems.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Forget business today, and go out for sports or other recreation which can relieve tensions you are under and go with good friends.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your thinking may be confused in the morning, so listen to what kin have to suggest. Follow the advice of a knowledgeable person.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Some strange situation can hold you back from being with good friends if you permit. Be social and happy in the evening with your mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Avoid that business affair which a friend suggested, and take care of your own interests. You can accomplish much today concerning a project.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A higher-up could be in a poor mood today, so avoid and get busy at your own duties. Be with a good friend until midnight and enjoy your duties.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

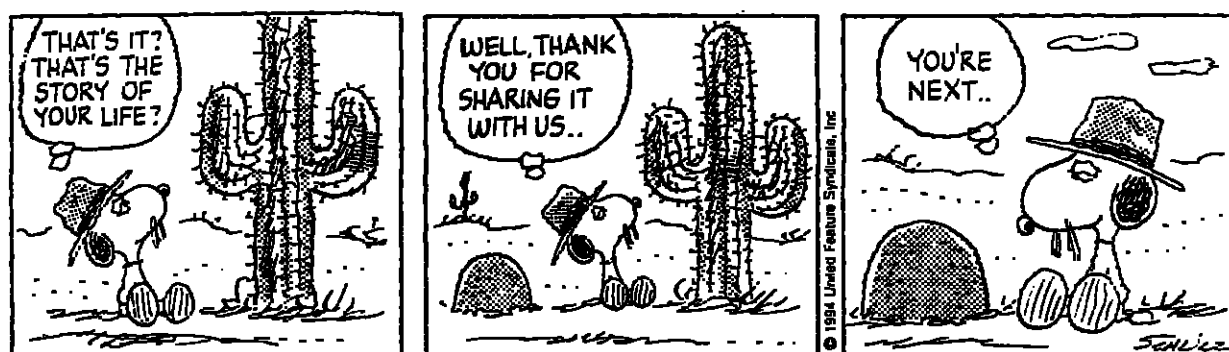
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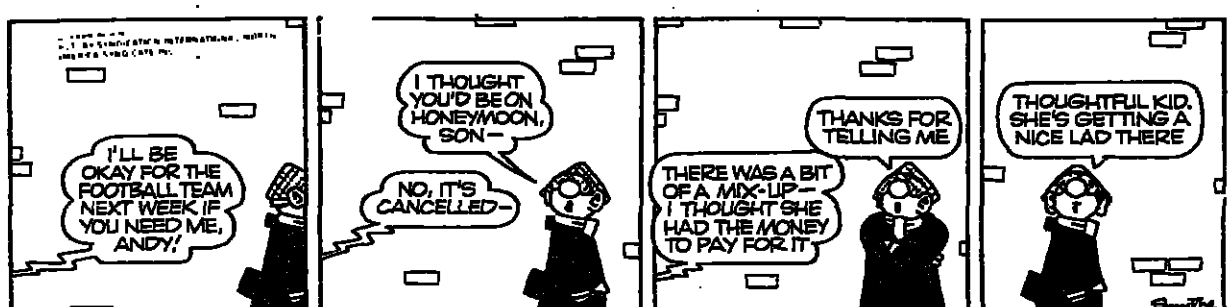


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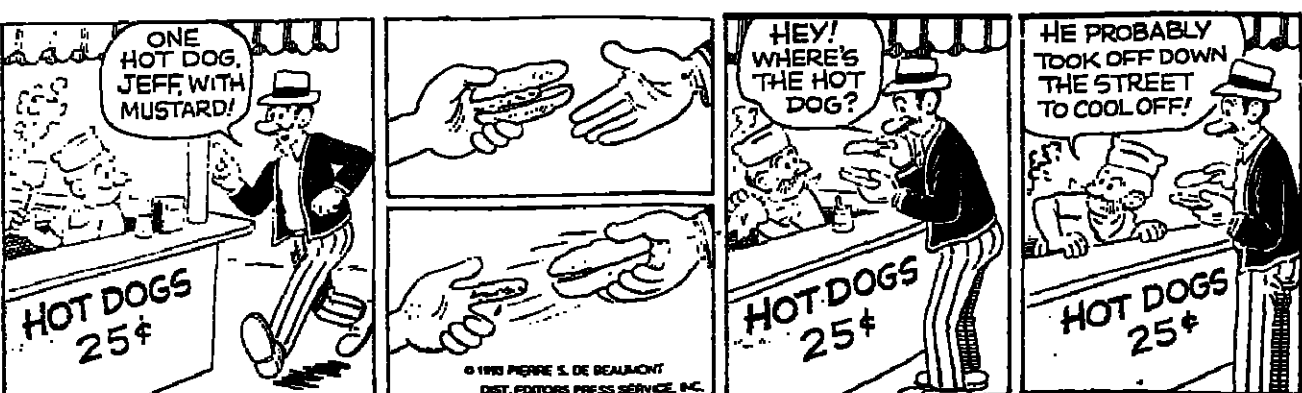
Peanuts



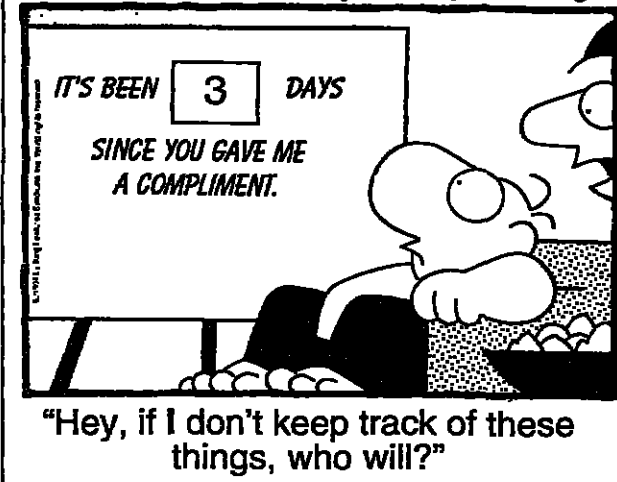
Andy Capp



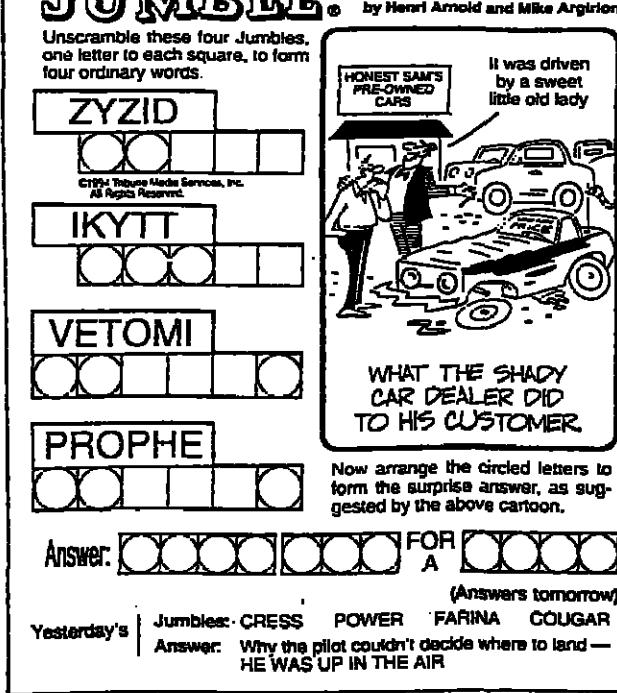
Mutt'n'Jeff



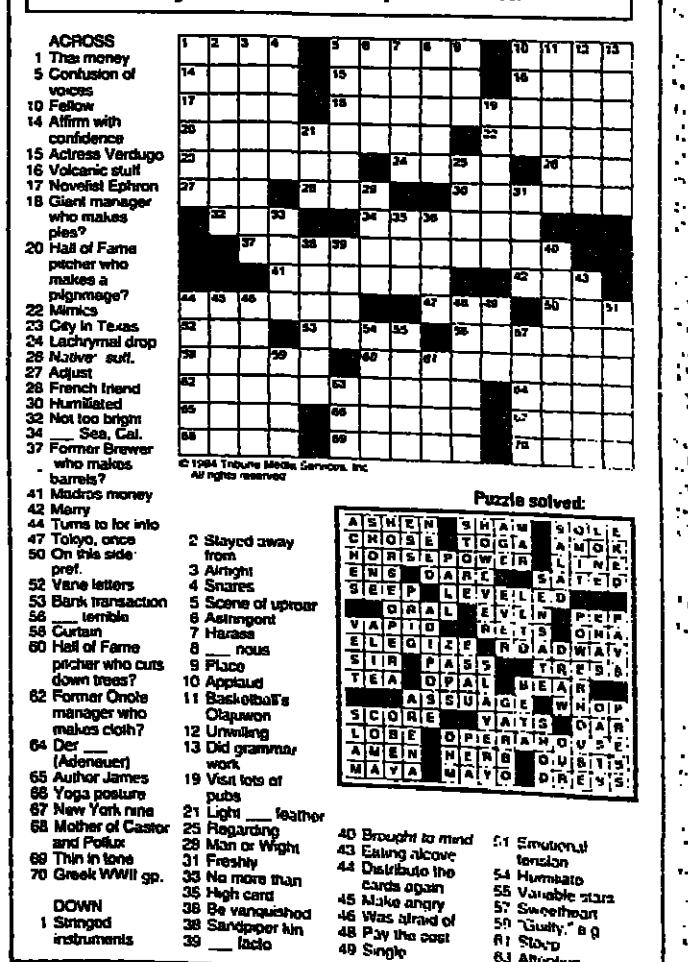
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



THE Daily Crossword by Janet R. Bender



Olajuwon scores 37 as Rockets down Warriors

The Associated Press

AT MILWAUKEE. The Cleveland Cavaliers overcame a career-high 34 points by Todd Day to beat the Milwaukee Bucks 93-87 Thursday night.

Mark Price scored 17 and Chris Mills added 15 as the Cavaliers held Milwaukee to just 30 second-half points in winning their fourth straight game.

Day had 23 points in the first quarter for the Bucks, who lost their fifth in a row. The Cavaliers took advantage of Milwaukee's poor shooting for a 25-3 run that gave Cleveland an 84-73 lead with 7:26 left. Milwaukee rallied to cut the lead to 91-87 with 37 seconds left.

★ Nuggets 89, Mavericks 80
At Dallas, Rodney Rogers scored 20 points and Brian Williams had 15 points and 13 rebounds as the Denver Nuggets beat the Dallas Mavericks.

The Nuggets, who snapped a three-game losing streak, led by 22 points in the third quarter. Dallas pulled to within 86-80 with 1:22 to play on Jim Jackson's basket, but that was as close as the Mavericks would come.

The Nuggets, who were without injured starters Reggie Williams and Bryant Stith, halted the Mavericks' three-game winning streak. Denver's Dikembe Mutombo had 13 points, 14 rebounds and four blocked shots.

Jim Jackson paced the Mavericks with 26 points and Popeye Jones added 11 points and a career-high 22 rebounds.

★ Timberwolves 96, Jazz 94
At Salt Lake City, Doug West hit two free throws with 47 seconds left Thursday night to give the Minnesota Timberwolves their second win of the season.

Minnesota, which broke a seven-game losing streak, outscored Utah 8-3 over the final two minutes. West, who finished with 18 points. Also scored on a slam dunk with 1:23 left.

J.R. Rider led Minnesota with 19 points.

Karl Malone paced the Jazz with 24 points, but had four turnovers and just five rebounds.

★ Pacers 93, Clippers 84
At Los Angeles, Reggie

Eastern Conference Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Orlando	10	2	.833	—
New York	7	4	.636	2½
Boston	7	4	.538	3½
New Jersey	6	9	.400	5½
Washington	4	7	.364	5½
Philadelphia	4	8	.333	6
Miami	3	9	.250	7

Central Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Cleveland	9	5	.643	—
Indiana	8	5	.615	½
Detroit	7	6	.538	1½
Chicago	7	6	.538	1½
Charlotte	7	6	.538	1½

STANDINGS

Western Conference

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Milwaukee	5	8	.385	3½
Atlanta	4	9	.308	4½

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Houston	11	3	.786	—
Utah	9	6	.600	2½
Dallas	7	5	.583	3
Denver	7	6	.538	3½
San Antonio	6	7	.462	4½
Minnesota	2	13	.133	9½

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Phoenix	10	4	.714	—
Seattle	9	5	.643	1
Golden state	8	6	.571	2
La Lakers	8	6	.500	3
Sacramento	6	6	.500	3
Portland	6	6	.500	3
L.A. Clippers	0	14	.000	10



Orlando Magic centre Shaquille O'Neal (right) centre Hakeem Olajuwon fails to stop him slam dunks a basket as Houston Rockets during their Nov. 29 match (AFP photo)

Chinese may have been forced to take steroids

BUFFALO (AP) — Chinese swimmers who tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs may have been forced to take steroids or not even told what they were taking, U.S. swim officials say.

"They may (know), but I'm not sure they have a choice," Richard Quick, who will coach the U.S. women at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, said Thursday.

"It was said in East Germany that if you didn't follow the programme, using the drugs as part of the programme, that you were thrown out, so you may not have a choice. And I think the young ones may not even know."

Eleven Chinese athletes, seven of them swimmers, tested positive for drugs at the Asian Games at Hiroshima, Japan, in October. M.C. Chinese officials denied their swimming federation encouraged or knew about drug use.

"This is an act by individuals," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said Thursday from Beijing, adding his country's sports authorities practice "strict prohibition, strict testing and strict punishment" of drug use.

But Quick doesn't believe it.

"I think the coaches know," he said. "I think the administrators know. I think it would be impossible not to know that."

The Chinese swimming programme has improved rapidly in the 1990s — a little too rapidly, some say, as coaches from other countries began to suspect that steroids were part of the reason.

Allegations of drug use escalated in September when the Chinese women won 12 of 16 gold medals at the World Championships in Rome. "It seemed like too much, too fast," said Greg Eggert, a board member of the U.S. swimming organisation.

In October, the Chinese women won all 15 of their

titles, seven of them tested positive.

But John Collins, coach of the Badger Swim Club in Larchmont, N.Y., said he's waiting to see if the Chinese change their ways.

"Everybody knew that they've been doing it, but we couldn't catch them. So the fact that they're catching them is great," he said. "But I don't know how it's going to be resolved."

China backs out of World Cup event

Meanwhile, China, which has been stung by a multiple doping scandal involving its champion swimmers, will not stage a World Cup swimming event in January, officials said Friday.

The second of the eight short course World Cup events was to have been in Beijing January 7 and 8, according to provisional calendars. But Yuan Jiawei, deputy secretary general of the Chinese swimming federation, said it had been a longstanding decision not to hold the event.

"We have no intention of staging a World Cup event in January at Beijing," Yuan said. "We took our decision in December 1993 for financial reasons and we made it known at this time."

According to organisers of the Hong Kong World Cup meeting, which precedes Beijing on the calendar, the Chinese had problems finding a sponsor.

"They had been expected to stage their event but could not sign a final agreement without the sponsor," said Johnny Li, chief executive of the Hong Kong organising committee.

It was not known if China's problems were connected to the latest drug scandal.

The Chinese Olympic Committee has started its own investigation.

FINA downplays scandal
In Algiers, World swim-

ming chief Mustafa Larfaoui came to embattled China's aid Friday, insisting there was no specific Chinese problem over drugs.

Larfaoui, who is president of the ruling body FINA, was speaking after seven Chinese swimmers were reported earlier this week to have failed drugs tests at the Asian Games in October.

Larfaoui, reached by telephone at his home here, told AFP: "For me, there is no specific Chinese problem at the moment."

Earlier this week a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said the latest doping scandal was a case of "individual acts" rather than any failure on the part of the authorities.

Larfaoui added that the latest cases of doping only made FINA more determined than ever to stamp out drug taking and that they intended to step up the amount of out-of-competition testing.

The reported dope test failures have sent shockwaves through the sport.

Australian swimming officials have called on FINA to double the penalty to four years for swimmers who test positive to banned substances.

Australian Swimming Incorporated (ASI) said it wanted suspensions to include at least one Olympic Games.

"For some time there has been a great deal of suspicion about the use of performance-enhancing drugs by some countries and FINA must act now," ASI executive director Vena Murray said.

Larfaoui also downplayed China's announcement earlier in the day that it will not be staging a World Cup swimming event in January.

"The cancelling of a World Cup event is a matter for the federation concerned, as FINA is not directly concerned by this competition," he said.

Jordan ends winter training

PHOENIX (APF) — Former basketball star Michael Jordan concluded his winter-league baseball training season here one day early, departing before Thursday's scheduled finale for the Scottsdale Scorpions.

Fans appearing for the Arizona Fall league game at nearby Chandler were unhappy at missing their final chance to watch the ex-Chicago Bulls' star play minor-league baseball in his quest to reach the major leagues.

"I can't say it. There are too many curs words involved," said 11-year-old Lance Howard, who wore a replica Bulls' jersey with Jordan's number.

Jordan helped the league attract more than 100,000 fans, compared to only 35,568 for all of last season. Jordan finished with a .252 batting average, hitting in 31 of 123 plate appearances. He scored 24 runs, made four doubles, a triple batted in eight runs, walked 16 times, stole six bases in 10 tries and struck out 34 times.

"The thing is, I'm in the early stages of my career," Jordan said. "I know I'm not considered a hot prospect. My hitting has improved. But I can't be expected to hit with power when I'm still learning to hit. I know I have a way to go."

Chicago White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf says Jordan will go from the AA level to the AAA level next season, putting Jordan one step away from the Major League level.

"He just needs to play," Scottsdale manager Terry Francona said. "As he plays, he is a conscientious enough guy that he will pick up on some of things he needs to work on."



Former Chicago Bulls basketball star Michael Jordan throws out the first pitch before game one of the American League Championship series (AFP photo)

Striking baseball players resume negotiations

LEESBURG, Virginia (R) — Major League Baseball owners and striking players resumed negotiations in suburban Washington under pressure of the owners' possible unilateral imposition of their terms next week.

The negotiating teams of both sides met for a couple of hours under the supervision of special Federal mediator William Utery.

Baseball owners have scheduled a meeting for December 5 in Chicago at which they could decide to impose their terms on the striking players association should no agreement be reached by then.

The owners' lead negotiator, Boston Red Sox Chief executive officer John Harrington, said it would be difficult for collective bargaining

to achieve anything after any implementation of the owners' terms.

"Once you go past implementation it will be difficult to put the yolk back into the egg," Harrington said.

Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder was pessimistic any agreement could be reached before the owners' meeting.

"It's going to be really tough to get anything worked out by next week," Butler said.

The owners' believe they have the right to unilaterally impose terms under Federal Labour Law which allows management to do so in the absence of a new collective bargaining agreement and following the declaration of an impasse.

The move would come prior to the deadline for

offering players salary arbitration. Owners have been adamant about not going through the arbitration process another year.

Colorado Rockies owner Jerry McMorris, speaking on ESPN radio, confirmed that owners would implement their own terms should no agreement be reached before the meeting.

McMorris also said that replacement players would be used to open the 1995 season should no agreement be reached by then. The Rockies owner said he expects they love baseball.

Union chief Donald Fehr said the players would not make an immediate counterproposal to the 102-page "tax" proposal offered by the owners earlier this month.



Abu Shakra launches Jaipur

THE ABU Shakra Trading Agency held a press conference at the Marriott Hotel to launch the new Jaipur perfume, of the French Boucheron company, in the local market.

Director general of the agency, Rami Abu Shakra, outlined the history, achievements and status of Boucheron among similar companies in the market.

Also speaking at the press conference was Boucheron representative Francois Nicollier who briefed the audience on the company and the new fragrance, saying since its establishment, Boucheron has been one of the most famous jewelers in the world.

"After the creation of the first women's fragrance and the launch of the Eau de Parfum for men, the new Jaipur perfume continues to remain faithful to the concept of the jewel bottle," said Mr. Nicollier.

He said Jaipur's inspiration was drawn from the travels of Louis Boucheron who was fascinated by legendary jewels of India and especially by Nauratan, a jewel made of nine precious stones, traditionally offered to brides for happiness and good luck.

A Nauratan bracelet inspired Alain Boucheron, the grandson of Louis Boucheron, to create his own Boucheron bracelet made of gold and set with nine stones, said Mr. Nicollier.

He said the floral fruity fragrance of Jaipur is composed of garden flowers and fruits of various notes.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Agriculture Projects Directorate Invitation to Tender for the Supply of Fertilizers and Agricultural Machinery for the project of the Increase of Food Production.

The steering committee of the projects Directorate in the Ministry of Agriculture invites interested Japanese trading firms with representative office or liaison office in Jordan to submit their financial offers for the supply of fertilizers and agricultural machinery for the project of the increase of food production financed by a grant aid from the Government of Japan for the purpose of contributing to the increase of food production in Jordan.

Interested companies can get the tender documents from the office of the technical adviser in MOA against a non-refundable amount of JD 200 per one set.

The last date for getting the tender documents is on Saturday the 10th. of December 1994.

Financial offers should be submitted in two copies to the office of the technical adviser in MOA not later than 12:00 o'clock local time on Saturday the 14th. of January 1995.

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Matthaeus to miss Dresden match after ban

FRANKFURT (R) — German soccer chiefs fined and banned national team captain Lothar Matthaeus for one game after he accused a World Cup referee of taking a bribe in a recent league match.

The German Football Federation (DFB) ordered the 33-year-old Bayern captain to pay 25,000 marks (\$15,900). Matthaeus, who has apologized for his emotional post-match outburst, will miss Bayern's Bundesliga home clash with Dynamo Dresden Saturday.

Matthaeus, Germany's record cap holder, alleged that World Cup referee Hellmut Krug had been bought by Karlsruhe after some controversial decision during Bayern's 2-2 draw at the club November 19.

He has escaped with a reasonably mild punishment. Former Borussia Dortmund player Michael Schulz was banned for five weeks in 1990 for similar accusations. Matthaeus's apology and general high standing in the

German game helped his cause.

Both Matthaeus and Bayern have accepted the ruling which allows the veteran midfielder-cum-libero to play in the Bavarians' crucial European Champions' League clash at Dynamo Kiev next week.

Bayern manager Uli Hoeness, however, said he still thought the decision was still very hard.

"We have accepted it with gritted teeth," Hoeness said. "If we had appealed, Lothar would have had to appear in Frankfurt on Friday. That is exactly the sort of upheaval we did not want before the important Champions' League match."

Matthaeus, whose outburst was captured on German television, added: "I accept the ruling. Because of the pressure of the media I did not expect a mild verdict."

"The team will win without me against Dresden. Finally, I will have a bit of time at the weekend to do some Christmas shopping for the family."



Lothar Matthaeus

1st Division Basketball Championship
Jazireh clash with Orthodoxi;
Ahli prepare for another big win

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — First Division basketball teams continue their matches Saturday with only ten days remaining in the competition which will conclude with the second Ahli-Orthodoxi final on Dec. 15.

Saturday's most important clash will be the Orthodoxi-Jazireh battle for second place.

Al Orthodoxi have already almost clinched the second spot after overcoming Al Jazireh 92-75 in their first round match. Therefore Al Jazireh have a very difficult task of scoring a 17 point win over the former champions if they want to advance their third placed standing which they clinched from Al Jazireh two years ago.

Al Jazireh retained their

standing in their latest match after scoring a 71-55 win over Al Jazireh. They enter today's match with only two losses to Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi.

Although Al Orthodoxi are playing this championship with their younger lineup after many older players, especially the team's ace Murad Barakat, retired last year, the team has nevertheless proved that they are strong power-base. They only lost 79-70 to Al Ahli in the first round final.

Al Orthodoxi will have to beat Al Ahli with over 9 points on Dec. 15 to force a best-of-three deciding round.

In other matches Saturday, Al Watani take on titleholders Al Ahli, while Al Jazireh play Homentmen at the Sports Palace. Al Ahli are the only unbeaten team of the tournament and are hoping to retain their third suc-

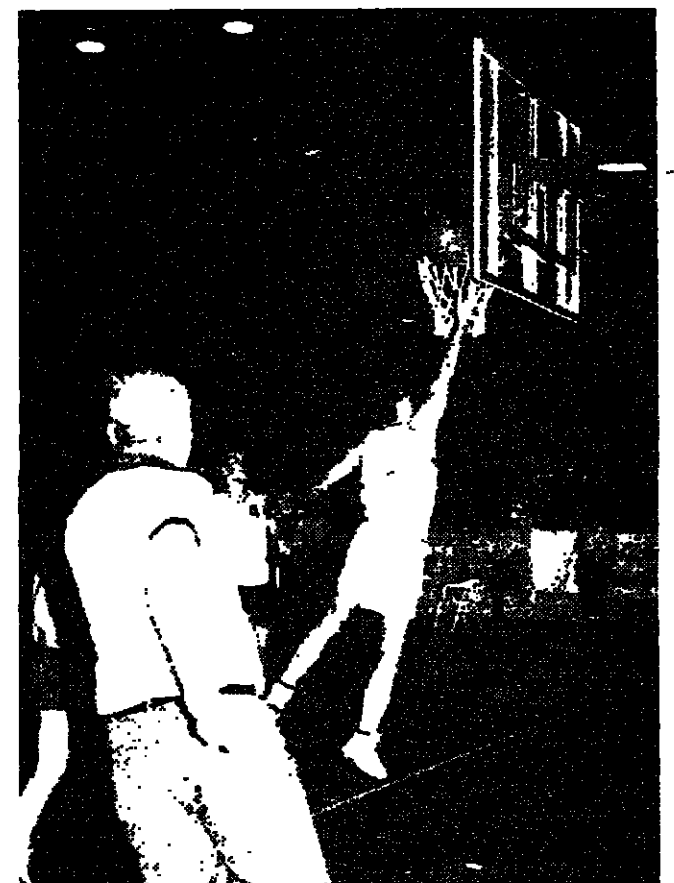
cessive title.

Al Watani have only scored their wins over Homentmen and are in danger of relegation unless they beat Al Hussein by four points on their Dec. 12 match. Al Hussein had won their first round match 79-76.

The teams in the third

match have no way of advancing their standing.

Homentmen have already been relegated after failing to score the minimum number of at least three wins, while Al Jazireh stayed in fourth place after losing to Al Jazireh in both rounds.



Al Ahli's Yousef Zaghlool goes for a layup (File photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Eder scores in Atletico win

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Eder, who played in Brazil's 1982 World Cup team, scored with a powerful left-foot free kick as Atletico Mineiro beat Botafogo 2-0 in the Brazilian championship on Thursday. A swerving shot by Eder, 38, deceived Botafogo goalkeeper Carlos in the 13th minute of the quarterfinal, first-leg game. Atletico scored again before halftime through Darcy against tired opponents who had played the previous Saturday and Tuesday.

Mourning fined for verbal abuse

NEW YORK (AP) — Centre Alonzo Mourning of the Charlotte Hornets was fined \$5,000 by the NBA for verbally abusing officials following a game last week. The incident occurred after last Wednesday's game at Boston, where the Celtics beat the Hornets 98-91. The league said Mourning was critical of the officiating crew of Steve Javie, Joe Derosa and Sean Corbin. The fine was announced by Rod Thorn, NBA vice president-operations.

European champion feared husband

VIENNA (AFP) — European 100m hurdles champion Svetla Dimitrova, who is suspended by Bulgaria's athletics federation for moving to Austria, was fleeing in fear of her husband and coach, according to her manager. Dimitrova, who finished second in the 1994 grand prix women's rankings, was suspended Thursday after quitting Bulgaria with her Austrian manager Harald Edlitzberger last month. But Edlitzberger claimed Friday that Dimitrova's flight was prompted by her husband and coach Ivan Pichitkov. "Mrs. Dimitrova was very afraid of her husband and believes no one can guarantee her safety if she returns to Bulgaria," he said. "Mrs. Dimitrova was insulted by her husband, whose only thought was to get more money out of her. She wants a divorce."

Tomba tackles opening races

TIGNES (AFP) — Alberto Tomba will be the man to watch this weekend, as the flamboyant Italian tackles the opening races in the men's Alpine Skiing World Cup. The actions start with a giant slalom Saturday and finishes with a slalom Sunday — the triple Olympic champion's preferred disciplines. The races were switched here after poor conditions at Sestriere last weekend. Tomba, who won the Olympic giant slalom title at nearby Val d'Isere in 1992, will have three main rivals on

Saturday — Norway's Kjetil-Andre Aamodt, last season's overall World Cup winner, Marc Girardelli, who is looking for his sixth World Cup title and Swede Fredrik Nyberg.

Jansher destroys Harris

DOHA (AFP) — World squash champion Jansher Khan crushed England's Del Harris 15-4, 15-3, 15-10 Friday to reach the final of the Qatar International Tournament. Jansher needed just 36 minutes to dispatch the Englishman and rarely had to move into top gear during a slow paced encounter. Harris tried to rally, but Jansher's superior length drives on the slowish court forced a series weak shots from the Englishman which the Pakistani disposed of at will. "It is depressing," said Harris. "I didn't get into it. I was loose and he just manoeuvred me out of position. I wanted to attack but I didn't get the chance. I'm not tired." Jansher will now face either Australian Rodney Eyles or another Englishman, Chris Walker.

Verdy captures 1994 J-League Championship

TOKYO (AP) — Verdy Kawasaki Friday captured the Japanese professional soccer league championship for the second straight year, beating Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1-0. More than 50,000 spectators at National Stadium saw 37-year-old Brazilian-born Japanese Ruy Ramos, overcoming a leg injury, fire a shot from just inside the penalty area past goalkeeper Kazumasa Kawano's head into the goal 35 minutes into the second half. Verdy, the second-stage champion and the 12-team J-League's inaugural season champion in 1993, defeated first-stage champion Sanfrecce 1-0 in the first game of the championship series.

Bastia banned from Furiani stadium

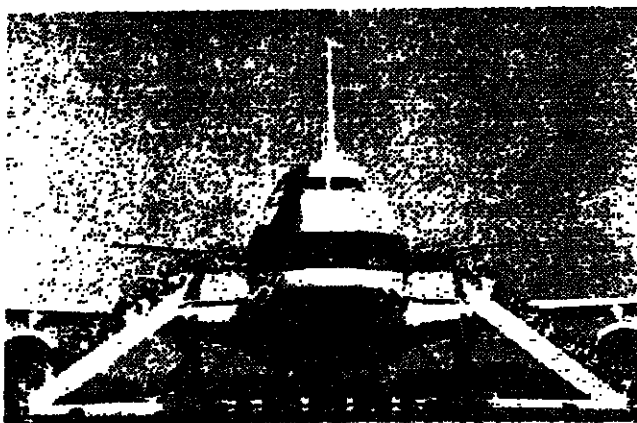
PARIS (R) — Bastia have been banned from playing at the infamous Furiani Stadium for at least one match following incidents during their home game against Monaco last Saturday. In suspending the Corsican stadium, the French league's disciplinary committee ruled that Bastia would not be able to play there for two home games but said the sanction could be reduced to one match if the next game there was trouble-free. A handful of angry Bastia fans invaded the pitch at the end of the first half of the Monaco match after referee Antoine de Pandis ruled out a Bastia goal. Monaco were leading 2-0 at the time. Fights broke out on the pitch, the game resumed after a 20-minute break and ended in a 2-2 draw, Bastia scoring twice in the second half.

KLM introduces family plan for frequent flyers

KLM Thursday introduced the Flying Dutchman Family plan allowing present and new members of their frequent flyer programme to accumulate points when up to six of their family members fly on KLM or one of their partner airlines.

The introduction is a demand in the market and caters for the specific customer needs in the Near and Middle East where people normally travel with their family or have their families spend the holidays in this area. Many of these passengers do a lot of travelling and when accumulating points on one card, they will be eligible for free tickets, upgrades, tax free vouchers or holidays more quickly.

Current and new members can nominate a maximum of six family members (minimum age 2), whom they entitle to earn points on their card. After a listed family member has flown, points will be added to the statement of the



member in question. What is unique about this programme is the fact that the number of points earned depend on the length of the journey. The longer the trip the more points are earned, whereas most programmes give a fixed number of points for family members. The airline is currently celebrating its 75th anniversary and is directing this promotion to those who have plans to

travel to one of KLM's 57 destinations in Europe and 150 destinations in the USA and Canada, but states that it will have its Family Plan facilities also available during the coming summer. The temporary promotion will end on September 31, 1995.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines operates daily flights from Amman and offers connections to 350 destinations around the world.

NHL
deadlock
remains

CHICAGO (R) — NHL owners and players exchanged proposals on three major issues on Thursday, but they remained far from resolving their collective bargaining impasse.

One insider described the tone of the eight-hour meeting in a swank downtown hotel as, "good, but not great." The Canadian press reported.

After the meeting adjourned, principles on both sides met privately. Negotiations were to resume on Friday and were expected to continue for the entire day.

Players, who have been locked out since Oct. 1, and owners dealt exclusively with free agency, salary arbitration and a proposed rookie salary cap on Thursday.

On the rookie salary cap issue, the NHL players' association dropped its desired salary ceiling to \$1.25 million from \$150 million for first-round players, while the NHL remained at \$700,000, sources told the Canadian press.

The NHL wants to retain its right to have an arbitrator's decision be non-binding, meaning that rather than paying the awarded salary a team could allow the player to become an unrestricted free agent.

The league also proposed a maximum of two players per team per year be allowed to walk away. The players want binding arbitration.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

Edberg wins thriller against Volkov

MOSCOW (AFP) — Stefan Edberg put Sweden in charge of the Davis Cup final against Russia Friday when he won a dramatic opening rubber against Alexander Volkov.

The 28-year-old looked to be coasting to victory when he went two sets up but suddenly Volkov stepped up the pace and Edberg found himself two sets all and the Russia serving match point in the fifth.

But Edberg's nerve held, as it did at 5-5 in the fifth when President Boris Yeltsin made his appearance, and he finally won 6-4, 6-2, 6-7 (2-7), 6-6, 8-6.

"I am very relieved to have come back from match point in the fifth," said Edberg afterwards.

"If I had lost I would have been very depressed. I should have won the match in three sets but he picked up his pace and I began making mistakes," added the Swede who has had a miserable season.

During the marathon match Edberg had 11 foot-faults and 14 double-faults.

"For four or five games I did not play very well. Fourteen double faults is far too many in a five set match," admitted the Swede. "I had been in charge and all of a sudden it changed."

Edberg's dramatic victory silenced the 12,000 strong Russian crowd who were convinced they were about to witness a dramatic comeback victory from Volkov.

Instead Sweden were on track to take their fourth Davis Cup title.

"We are looking quite good as of now," said Edberg.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI
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CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUIT

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ A 4 3
♥ A K J 10 6 5
♦ K 4
♣ K 6

EAST
♠ Q 7 6
♥ Q 5 2
♦ Q 10 6 5 3 2
♣ J 9 8

SOUTH
♠ A 7 10 9 8
♥ 9 3
♦ A Q J
♣ A 2

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 NT Pass 4 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass 4 NT Pass
5 ♠ Pass 7 NT Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♣

With 10 tricks in high cards, declarer must develop one of the major suits for three extra tricks. The percentage line is to cash the ace-king in one suit and, if the queen does not appear, take the finesse in the other. Is there any valid reason for selecting to play off the top hearts over spades on this deal, or vice versa?

North could have made a jump shift originally, but thought that taking a slow approach might yield more information. Four clubs was an effort to see whether South would offer delayed heart support. When partner could not, North checked on aces and then elected to bid a grand slam in no trump rather than in a suit—that decision, in effect, brought both major suits into play rather than just one.

West led the nine of diamonds and the problem was simple. In which suit should declarer take the finesse after cashing the ace-king in the other? If declarer elects to take the finesse in hearts, then the right play is to do so immediately rather than first cash a high honor. Cash- ing an honor will work if the queen is singleton, but will fail when West has four cards in the suit because the queen will not be able to be picked up.

That is not the case in spades. If, after cashing the ace and king of hearts the queen does not appear, declarer can cash the king of spades in an attempt to drop a singleton queen. If her majesty does not fall, declarer can still take two finesses and succeed even if the suit breaks 4-1, so long as East has the spade length.

As an undeserved reward you will make the grand slam if you cashed two high spades and then a high heart. But the experts will know you do not merit this bonanza.

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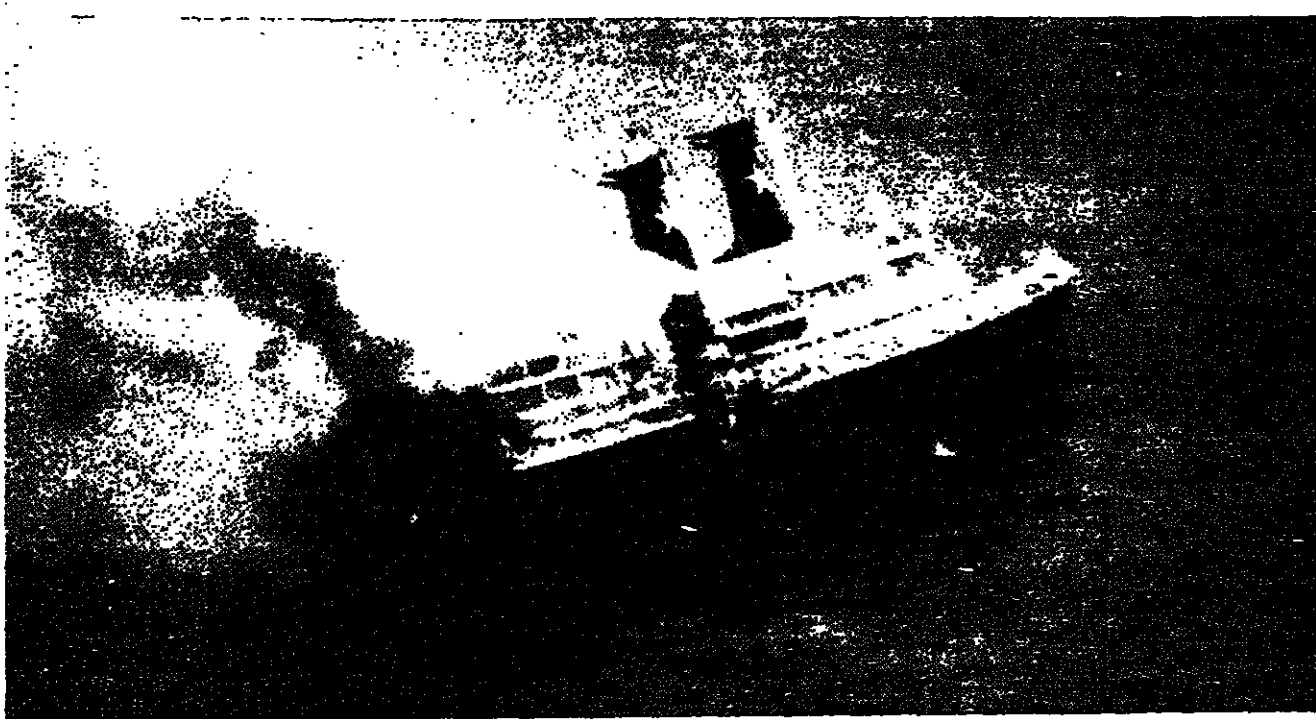
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	The film which won seven Oscars IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45		David Bradley in Cyborg Cop Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD "1" Tom Hanks ... in Sleepless in Seattle Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Sister Act Shows: 3:15, 5:15		very soon Musa Hijazin (Suma'h) in political satire HL...Citizen CHILDREN'S PLAY Water Is A Blessing From Heaven Time 10:00 a.m.		Thursday...Thursday 1.12.1994 You have a date with Abu Awad at the opening of the new performance of the comedy: A Punctured Bag (Qirbeh Makhzouqa) Ticket window is open all day		Presents: The political satire: Al Salaam Ya Salaam Daily at 8:30 Saturday & Sunday is the theatre's holiday. In English next Saturday and Sunday	



An aerial view of the Italian cruise ship, the Achille Lauro, on fire in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Somalia (AFP photo)

Jordan to claim its share of Yarmouk water now used by Syria

By Natasha Bokhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian water rights from riparians of the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers are not yet fully restored as Syria has been diverting an annual 95 million cubic metres of Jordan's share from the Yarmouk River since the 50s, according to water experts.

The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty signed on Oct. 26 secures the Kingdom's water share from Israel, but regional cooperation and stability can only be attained when disputes over water in the area as a whole are resolved, said Munther Haddadin, who negotiated Jordanian water rights with Israel.

The treaty increases Jordan's water share by a total of 230 million cubic metres (MCMs), he told the Jordan Times, adding that there is more of the Kingdom's share to be restored from Syria.

Dr. Haddadin, who described negotiations with Israel over water as "long and arduous," said he adopted the principle of "integrity of the river system" and not the Johnston plan as it is widely assumed as the basis for agreement.

This principle prohibits any party to use water outside the river system if that water is needed by any riparian. Dr. Haddadin, however, said that the agreement Jordan reached with Israel was closer to the principle of equitable and reasonable utilisation which entitles each basin state a reasonable and equitable share in beneficial uses of waters in its territories.

Jordan's major surface and ground water resources are shared with other riparians. The Yarmouk River and ground waters in the north are shared among Jordan, Syria and the West Bank, and the Jordan River system in the west is shared with Israel.

A study conducted by American experts in 1953 and agreed upon by the Arabs in 1955 allocates 330 MCMs annually to Jordan, 47 MCMs to the West Bank, 25 MCMs to Israel and 90 MCMs to Syria from the Yarmouk River.

While Israel was using 70-MCMs, Syria was and still is using 220 MCMs — 95 MCMs more than it was allocated.

Following intensive negotiations with Israel, Jordan managed to restore its water rights from Israel from both the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers, but Syrian violations of the regional agreements have not yet been addressed.

In a televised address to the nation last month, His Majesty King Hussein said that Jordan will strive to regain its water rights in full. Although the King did not mention Syria by name, Jordanians are aware of Syria's diversion of Jordan's share of the Yarmouk, which lies on the Jordanian-Syrian border.

Observers believe that King Hussein's reference to the remaining water rights could form the backbone for future Jordanian-Syrian negotiations on the issue based on a formal Jordanian demand of the "rightful share" of water.

Dr. Haddadin said that regional stability and cooperation was impossible in the presence of conflicts over water. "Even if the water issue was dealt with in peace agree-

ments involving Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians, the region will not be stable as long as there are signs of dispute between Syria and Iraq over Euphrates waters," he said.

The two downstream sharers of the river (Syria and Iraq), which has flows down from Turkey, have sparked political disputes due to conflicts over water.

In 1975, Iraq called an urgent meeting of the foreign ministers of the Arab League to discuss claims to Euphrates waters. In the tense week that followed both Iraq and Syria moved troops towards their mutual frontier. The situation was defused by Saudi intervention, but tense relations between the two sides still prevail.

Competition among Turkey, Syria and Iraq for Euphrates waters can be resolved by reaching compatible agreements between the beneficiaries if the river waters as well as foreign investment for utilising the waters are used in a manner that would serve the whole region, said Dr. Haddadin.

"Then the region's water would be distributed; thus (creating) a regional order..." he said.

Achille Lauro passengers steam towards safe ports

DJIBOUTI (Agencies) — Their luxury cruise cut short by an inferno of smoke and fire, nearly 1,000 weary passengers and crew members of the abandoned Achille Lauro steamed towards safe ports Friday in a motley fleet of warships and cargo freighters.

Two elderly passengers died and eight were injured after fire erupted in the engine room of the Achille Lauro before dawn Wednesday and spread to engulf the ship, despite efforts by the crew to contain it.

"The fire was so big you had to fight through smoke which poured down toward the cabins," survivor Tony Webb was quoted as telling London's Daily Telegraph.

"At about 8 a.m., the captain said the fire was too strong and we would have to abandon ship," added Mr. Webb, 44, a Briton living in Cape Town, South Africa.

Passengers clad in evening clothes and bed dress clambered aboard life boats and rafts and evacuated the ship, followed sometime later by the fire-fighting team and finally, the captain, Giuseppe Orsi.

"From what I saw, (the ship) is gone," Mr. Orsi said by radio from one of the rescue ships Thursday.

The Achille Lauro was adrift in the Indian Ocean off Somalia on Friday, listing badly to port and still smoldering, its troubled his-

Liner sinks

THE ACHILLE Lauro sank Friday, officials said. The liner went down at 7:10 p.m. local time as it was being towed by an ocean-going tug, a few nautical miles from where the blaze had started in the engine room early Wednesday.

The ship's name burst into headlines in 1985 when the Achille Lauro was hijacked by Palestinians who allegedly killed an American and dumped his body overboard.

They escaped the vessel and boarded a jet, but U.S. fighter planes forced it to land in Italy and the hijackers were captured.

Eight cargo vessels and two American warships, the USS Gettysburg and Halyburton, carried the Achille Lauro's surviving passengers and crew members towards Djibouti, Mombasa in Kenya and Muscat, Oman.

Most were heading for Mombasa but none of the rescue ships was expected to dock before Sunday.

Port authorities in Djibouti said they expected survivors from the liner to arrive on Saturday on three merchant ships and two U.S. navy vessels.

The 977 passengers and crew from nine countries

were plucked from shark-infested waters and distributed on Thursday between 10 rescue ships.

Port authorities said the first ship to arrive in Djibouti would be the Liberian-registered bulk carrier Bardu with six Italians, four Israelis, 15 South Africans, 10 British, six Dutch and seven German passengers and crew from the ill-starred liner.

It would be followed by the Lima with 50 passengers, the Iran Sharbaz with 40 passengers, the Gettysburg with 165 passengers and the Halyburton with 43.

A U.S. Navy spokesman said only one tugboat remained near the bulk of the Achille Lauro.

Lloyds Shipping of London said the tug Solano had cooled the rear of the liner and secured a line to it, but the fire could only be extinguished by a fire-fighting crew aboard.

Two elderly male passengers died in the tragedy — a German who suffered a heart attack and a Briton who was killed by a blow to the head while he was boarding a life raft.

Shipping agents said the survivors would need clothing, food, shelter and some might need medical attention. They said they hoped a shortage of hotel rooms would be solved by the French military garrison in Djibouti accommodating some.

Iran paving way for Khamenei to succeed Araki

NICOSIA (AP) — As Iran strives to name its spiritual leader as the supreme head of the world's 100 million Shiite Muslims, a leading cleric said Friday that the new man must be politically aware because Islam is under threat, Tehran Radio reported.

Iran's theocratic government began moves to promote Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the new head of the sect shortly after Grand Ayatollah Ali Araki died Tuesday. He was at least 100.

The man who succeeds Araki "must have a greater political awareness than previous holders of the office," Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said in a sabbath sermon at Tehran University on Friday.

He said such a leader was needed because a resurgent Islam was "confronted by an American-backed Islam."

Ayatollah Jannati is a close associate of Ayatollah Khamenei and is a member of several key official committees. His comments underlined fears among many Shiites that the Tehran leadership, by intervening in what has traditionally been a solely religious matter, is



Ali Araki seeking to give the state control over religion in Iran and authority over Shiites around the world.

Traditionally the major Ala, or supreme spiritual leader, of the Shiites has been chosen from the grand ayatollahs, the top ranking clerics in Iran or Iraq by theologians themselves in the leading Shiite seminaries in Qom and the holy city of Najaf in Iraq.

There are less than a dozen grand ayatollahs alive at this time.

Ayatollah Khamenei, 55, has the qualifications of a middle-ranking cleric, but the radio referred to him as a

grand ayatollah several times Wednesday.

The official Islamic Republic News Agency, IRNA also quoted at least two Iranian ayatollahs as saying that Ayatollah Khamenei was qualified to succeed Araki.

There has been official word that Ayatollah Khamenei had been promoted to grand ayatollah by Iran's religious establishment.

In the past, the supreme spiritual leaders have eschewed involvement in politics.

But Iran has been trying to fuse the political and spiritual roles into one in an effort to boost its clout among the sect and promote its version of Islam around the world.

Shiites, who comprise about 10 percent of the world's one billion Muslims, are the predominant sect in Iran and Azerbaijan, and the majority in Iraq. Small numbers exist elsewhere in the Muslim World.

Araki was buried Thursday in Qom, the centre of Shiite religious learning, in a funeral attended by millions, Tehran Radio reported.

S. Arabia denies Qatar border shooting

DUBAI (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia has dismissed as untrue a claim by Qatar that there have been several shooting incidents along their disputed borders.

An official statement said investigations by Saudi authorities showed that such incidents, cited by Qatar as a reason for its boycott of a meeting of the six-country Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) last week, had never occurred.

"Qatar was assured after investigations by Saudi authorities that this incident or other similar incidents never occurred," the statement, reported by the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) early on Friday, said of the Qatari claims.

The official Qatari News Agency (QNA) quoted Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani as saying on Wednesday one Qatari was wounded by Saudi border guards in

one of several incidents between March and October.

He said he had boycotted the Nov. 27-28 meeting of GCC interior ministers in Riyadh because his country had not received a response to complaints it made to Saudi Arabia about the incidents.

Ties between the two neighbours have been tense since 1992 when Qatar stayed away from several GCC ministerial meetings and threatened to boycott the GCC annual summit after a border incident in which Qatar said three people were killed.

A December 1992 agreement to demarcate the border within one year, brokered by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in a bid to ease tensions between the two Arab states, has yet to be implemented.

The Saudi statement said Qatar first notified Riyadh of one incident on Nov. 12, the

same day that it announced it was boycotting the ministerial meeting of the GCC — which also includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

The meeting is one of several held by GCC ministers ahead of this year's GCC summit, due in Bahrain on Dec. 19.

"We had no reports of such incidents from Qatar before that," the Saudi statement said.

A Saudi reply assuring Qatar that reports of the incident were untrue, was sent to Qatar on Nov. 23, several days before the ministerial meeting, the statement added.

It said that Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz had also personally told Qatari interior minister of Riyadh's "keen interest in maintaining the best relations of friendship and brotherhood" with Qatar. He had urged Sheikh

Abdullah to attend the Riyadh meeting and hold bilateral discussions on any matters of mutual interest, it added.

"If Qatar wants to find justifications for staying away from the GCC interior ministers' meeting, then that is its own concern," the statement said.

The GCC groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain.

The five other interior ministers met in Riyadh Nov. 27-28 to finalise an agreement to tighten security cooperation and allow their police forces to chase fugitives across each other's borders.

Four of the ministers endorsed the agreement, but Kuwait demurred.

Bahrain, also locked in a dispute with Qatar over territorial water boundaries, is hosting the next GCC summit.

U.S.: Arafat shows good faith

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton's administration said on Friday it has no evidence that Palestinian elements controlled by Yasser Arafat have been involved in attacks on Israelis.

In a report to Congress on Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) compliance with the peace agreement with Israel, the State Department said that the organisation "both in its words and deeds is negotiating in good faith and is demonstrating that it recognises Israel's right to exist."

The report criticised Palestinian police as not being "as effective as they could have been in halting acts of violence."

It also expressed disappointment that the PLO has not yet amended its covenant to delete language calling for the destruction of Israel.

The report said Mr. Arafat has assured Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of his commitment to amend the covenant "but did not present a definitive timetable."

Congress required the administration to report every six months on the progress of PLO compliance with

its commitments to renounce "terrorism," amend its covenant, and end the economic boycott of Israel.

The report said that during the past six months groups opposed to the peace process — Hamas and Islamic Jihad — "have launched a concerted effort to undermine negotiations by killing Israelis and discrediting the authority and effectiveness of the Palestinian Authority."

During that period 39 Israelis have been killed, six of them in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

"These terrorist groups do not belong to or operate under the control of the PLO and have openly opposed Arafat because of his commitment to make peace with Israel," the department said.

It said the PLO had "moved to condemn terrorist attacks in a more timely, direct and authoritative manner," but it also said the Palestinian police "have not been as effective as they could be, in particular in terms of following up on investigations, actual prosecution and incarceration of those responsible."

It also said that "the

Palestinian police have not been effective in locating terrorist operatives who are organised in small compartmented cells."

As for the economic boycott, the report said that the PLO had "signed a detailed economic protocol with Israel which represents a de facto reversal of the PLO's traditional support for the boycott."

At the same, the State Department noted that the PLO "has not explicitly called for an end to any aspect of the boycott."

U.S. releases aid

The United States, moving to implement commitments by an international donors meeting, said on Thursday it would immediately make available \$4 million in aid to Palestinians and expedite disbursement of another \$12 million.

The announcement followed an international donors meeting on Wednesday in Brussels that agreed to meet the Palestinian budget deficit of \$125 million and pump \$23 million into boosting employment in the region.

State Department deputy spokeswoman Christine Shelley said the United States "would provide as soon as possible \$12 million of its fiscal '95 pledge amount to the World Bank Holst fund to cover start up costs."

Further, "to address the urgent needs of the Palestinians, we are making immediately available \$4 million in 1994 funding that had been committed to medium and long-term technical assistance, she said.

The United States has also agreed to use another \$4 million to pay the salaries of the Palestinian police force established under the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreement, she said.

The two-day donor meeting in Brussels agreed to make an all-out effort to accelerate the progress of the Palestinian development programme.

World leaders are concerned that the economic desperation among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza is fuelling the violence and political unrest that could unravel the Israel-PLO accord.

Palestinians sceptical of Lebanon disarmament

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Many Palestinian refugees doubt that the Lebanese government will attempt to disarm them in their camps despite official warnings following factional fighting last week in which six Palestinian combatants died.

Palestinian officials said they had not been officially notified about Lebanese government plans to disarm them.

In an interview with a Beirut newspaper, Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouze warned that "pockets of insecurity" would not be tolerated in the country.

"To remedy this situation the state will not hesitate to extend its authority inside the (Palestinian refugee) camps," he said.

A government official said earlier Lebanon was to disarm Palestinian refugees and could send the army into their camps if they objected.

The government has been trying to enforce law and order in the country since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war, during which Israel twice invaded Lebanon to end Palestinian attacks.

After inter-Palestinian fighting last week in the 'Ain Al Hilweh camp — the largest in Lebanon, with a population of 80,000 — President Elias Hrawi threatened to send in the army if more clashes erupted.

The operation to disarm the Palestinians would mainly involve medium-calibre and personal weapons, since heavy weapons were supposed to have been removed in 1991, a year after Lebanon also disarmed all its militias

except for the Iranian-backed Hizbollah.

Last week's clashes broke out when supporters of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat tried in vain to wrest control of the 'Ain Al Hilweh camp from opponents who had split from his main Fateh faction after the 1993 signing of the peace accord with Israel.

Sultan Abul Ainain, head of Fateh in Lebanon, saw the issue of disarming the Palestinians as "political" and therefore should be tackled by the PLO leadership.

Referring to the peace negotiations with Israel, Mr. Abul Ainain said: "I think that the weapons which the Palestinians have are a card in the hands of the Lebanese and the Syrians."

"So why offer them now to the Americans, before the arrival of Warren Christopher?"

The U.S. Secretary of state starts a new peace shuttle between Israel and Syria next week.

The Lebanese government said meanwhile it would enter Palestinian refugee camp to disarm guerrillas when it saw fit and would not negotiate with Mr. Arafat over the surrender of weapons.

"The government did not take a decision to send the army to the camps and... will not negotiate with Yasser Arafat because the Lebanese government decides what it will do on Lebanese land," Deputy Prime Minister Michel Al Murr told reporters after a late-night cabinet session.

Parents of Lebanese convict in U.S. attack urge fair sentence

BEIRUT (AP) — The parents of a Lebanese immigrant convicted of killing a Jewish teenager in a New York ambush admonished the judge in the trial to pass a "fair sentence."

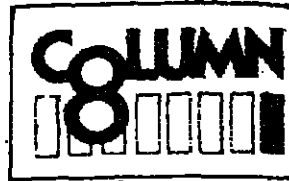
A New York jury on Thursday convicted Rashid Baz, 28, of second-degree murder and 14 counts of attempted murder. He faces 25 years to life at his Jan. 18 sentencing.

"I don't think my son got a fair trial. The jury was very harsh," said Mr. Baz's 52-year-old mother, Suhela.

"But I have high hopes in the American judge and I hope my son will get a fair sentence, considering his illness," she told the Associated Press in an interview at her apartment in Beirut's Sakier Al Janzir neighbourhood.

She did not say what a "fair sentence" would be.

Mr. Baz, a lively cab driver, admitted he straddled a van carrying Hasidic Jews with bullets on March 1 as it drove onto the Brooklyn Bridge carrying 15 students. Sixteen-year-old Aaron Halberstam was killed and three others were wounded.



Democracy forum uses Khmer Rouge flag for Cambodia

SEOUL (R) — Cambodia's frequent political changes in the past few years have got the better of organisers of an International Democracy Forum in south Korea. They used the wrong flag for the country — twice. At the right of the speaker's podium at the Forum of Democratic leaders in the Asia-Pacific was not the blue and red royalist flag adopted after elections last year, but a large red and gold banner of the hated Khmer Rouge. "Oh dear, none of us noticed," said Son Soubert, vice chairman of the Cambodian parliament when shown the Khmer Rouge flag. "It's been changed at the U.N. and everything." The Khmer Rouge government called itself "democratic" Kam-puchea (Cambodia) during its rule in the 1970s that killed a million Cambodians, but it boycotted the U.N.-run polls and is waging a guerrilla war against the new administration. In the conference logo, organisers used a pale blue banner with a superimposed map of Cambodia that was used during the U.N. transition to elections. Organisers reacted with shock and embarrassment. "You mean it's not the flag of Cambodia? We'll have to change it immediately," said one conference official.

Embryos start out female, study shows

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Researchers at the University of Chicago have isolated a genetic switch in embryos that start out female to become male, according to study to be published Friday in the journal Science.

"The embryo destined to become a boy begins as a female," said Dr. Michael Weiss, director of a team that used sophisticated imaging techniques to explore the biological pathway to manhood. "It lays down first female structures and not male structures at a phase when the embryo looks like a recognisable mammal, with toes, fingers and eyes and a heart," he said. Dr. Weiss said the switch occurs 35 to 40 days into human gestation when the SRY gene, which is on the Y Chromosome, turns on and another gene, called MIS, works to remove the female parts of the original embryo.

Solving the puzzle of molecular transformations may answer questions about other basic cellular changes, such as the development of cancer, Dr. Weiss said. Sex determination in mammals stems from the X or Y Chromosome of the sperm that fertilises the egg. The Y Chromosome is the male element that carries the SRY gene.

Vehicle mayor calls for less talk, more cash

ROME (AFP) — The mayor of Venice told the Italian government Wednesday to talk less and spend more to save his city and said it should make up its mind whether saving Venice was a question of national interest. "I have had enough of talk about the exceptional, unique, extraordinary character of Venice without anything actually being done," Massimo Cacciari told a news conference.

Mr. Cacciari, who is well-known philosopher in Italy besides being mayor of Venice, accused the government of abandoning his city. He said that while there was talk at the international level of the thousands of billions of lire (billions of dollars) needed to save it from being swallowed by the sea, the city council could not even meet its running expenses. He criticised reforms introduced by the government of Silvio Berlusconi removing some tax breaks from the city which, he said, were not a privilege but a necessity and enabled Venice to compete with other places in Italy and to stay alive. For the past 10 years Venice has been losing population. In 1992 it had 75,000 inhabitants but forecasts say that by the year 2000 there will be only 60,000 people living in its historic centre.

Mr. Cacciari said that the city had cost its needs for the years 1995 to 1997 at 665 billion lire (\$410 million)